Gurav or Shaiva Brahmin Demands

A Policy Manfasto for Recognition and Rights

Published by The Shaiva Bramhin Research and Advocacy Cauncil

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Shaiva Brahman (Gurav) Community

Historical Records, Social Status & Policy Demands

Key References & Sources

Census Reports: 1881, 1901, 1909 (Karnataka & Hyderabad Gazette)

Letters & Records: Shankaracharya Letter

Scholarly Works:

- Jayant Bapat (1993, 1998) – Gurav Studies
- Sujata Patil Paper
- Konkan Pranalitil Gurav Samaj
- Saptakhandi Jati Nirnay
- Gurav of Goa: Their Social Status
- John Wilson – Tables on Literacy & Status

Government & Policy References: OBC classification records, GR demands

Issues Addressed

Historical recognition of the Shaiva Brahman identity

Proof of no endogenous division in the Gurav community

Caste nomenclature disputes: Gurav or Shaiva Brahman

Literacy and social status (2001 reports)

Demands for:

- Removal of Gurav from OBC list
- Recognition as Shaiva Brahman (separate from Brahman section)
- Uniform GR (Government Resolution) across all states

■ **Prepared for Submission to:**

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Report on the Census of the Baroda Territories 1881

By Gajanan Krishna Bhatavadekar · 1883 Page number 152

are labourers, 3 live on immovable property, 9 on annuities and 10 on pensions; 4 are agriculturists; 9 follow industrial occupations, 7 of them being embroiderers; 2 are midwives, and 1 is a schoolmistress.

Degraded Brahmans.

514. The degraded Brahmans were in the list separated from other Guzerathi and Deccani Brahmans. But this division also is not a logical one, as most of the castes shown under this head are also Guzerathi. Guzerathi or Deccani Brahmans may properly be regarded as a genus of which Guzerathi pure and Guzerathi degraded Brahmans or pure Deccani and degraded Deccani Brahmans may be regarded as the species. The Káratiá, Vyás, Shravan, Tapodhan, &c. are all as much Guzerathi Brahmans as the other pure Guzerathi Brahmans, their profession making their status lower than that of the rest.

515. The number of degraded Brahmans amounts to 10,287, of whom 272 are Deccanis and the rest Guzerathis.

Tapodhans.

516. The Tapodhans, who are generally the worshippers in temples, and who, therefore, are among the Guzerathis, what the Guravs are among the Deccanis, number 5,187, of whom 4,049 are in the Kadi Division, and the rest are distributed among the other Divisions. The fact of their being the worshippers of *Shiva* and thus the receivers of the offerings placed before the god, makes their status lower than that of other Brahmans. Among the village Tapodhans, remarriage is, I learn, allowed.

Káratiás.

517. The Káratias or Brahmans who assist in funeral obsequies of other than Brahman castes, number 2,247. In the Amreli Division they number 2,061. In Guzerath the family priests officiate at the funeral ceremonies of Brahmans, and they are not thereby regarded as degraded. Among the Deccanis, however, the family priests do not so officiate—the *Kriyá* or the obsequies being invariably conducted by certain Brahmans who do the work as their profession, and who are, therefore, regarded as a little degraded.

Rájgors.

518. The Rajgors were generally the priests of the chiefs and princes in Kathiawár, and are said to have overcome the paternal scruples of the Jadeja Rajputs in the matter of infanticide by undertaking to take upon themselves the sin arising from the crime.

Vyásadás.

519. The Vyas Brahmans, or as they are called by the other Guzerathi Bramans Vyasadas, are regarded as lower in status because the custom of remarriage obtains among them. Being of the degraded class, they eat with the other castes, and the only vestige of their once belonging to the sacerdotal class is their sacred thread.

Guravs.

520. The Guravs, who are emigrants from the Deccan, number 254 (138 M. and 116 F.); of these 197 (103 M. and 94 F.) are in the Baroda City. In the Deccan, and especially in the Konkan, the Guravs generally are worshippers in temples. The most probable origin of the word Gurava as was once told me by an intelligent Shastree is, that when Buddhism prevailed, the ministers in temples were called "gurus," or preceptors, गुरव: being the honorific plural of the term. After Brahmanism triumphed over Buddhism, the old worshippers in temples naturally lost the esteem and respect they once commanded, but as their successors retained their old occupation of worship, they retained their name गुरव:. They were naturally regarded as being lower in status than the Brahmans, and in course of time the Guravs became reconciled to their new position. The Guravs in this territory are not worshippers in temples. Their main occupation is that of playing music. In the *Kirtans* of *Haridás* or *Bávás*, the man who plays on the "*Mridung*" is generally a Gurav. The musicians who are engaged on marriage and other occasions are generally Guravs. Another occupation greatly followed by the Guravs is that of preparing leaf-plates or *Patrávals* used for placing food on at the time of meals.

Occupations of the degraded Brahmans.

521. Among the degraded Brahmans 3,571 or 67·50 per cent. of the male sex and 1,075 or 21·51 of the female sex work for livelihood. Public service is the occupation of 167 males, the majority being in the lower grade service. Religious professions form the

Census of India, 1901
Volume 18, Part 1
(1902) page number
541 & section 24

Appendix III.

Alphabetical List of Castes in the Baroda State, 1901—contd.

Name of Caste.	Name of Sub-Caste.	Religion.	Usual Occupation.
31. Brahman ...	.....	Hindu	Priests.
" 1 ...	Aboti	"	"
" 2 ...	Achári	"	"
" 3 ...	Anávalá	"	"
" 4 ...	Audich	"	"
" ...	1 Gohelwádi ...	"	"
" ...	2 Jhálawádi ...	"	"
" ...	3 Sahasra ...	"	"
" ...	4 Tolakiá ...	"	"
" 5 ...	Bardái	"	"
" 6 ...	Bhárgav	"	"
" 7 ...	Bhojak (degraded)..	"	"
" 8 ...	Borsadá	"	"
" 9 ...	Brijwánsi ...	"	"
" 10 ...	Chovisá	"	"
" ...	1 Motá ...	"	"
" ...	2 Náhaná ...	"	"
" 11 ...	Dadhich	"	"
" 12 ...	Derolá	"	"
" 13 ...	Deshastha ...	"	"
" ...	1 Rigvedi ...	"	"
" ...	2 Yajurvedi ...	"	"
" 14 ...	Devarukha ...	"	"
" 15 ...	Disával	"	"
" 16 ...	Divechariá ...	"	"
" 17 ...	Drávidi	"	"
" 18 ...	Gaud	"	"
" ...	1 Adyagaud ...	"	"
" ...	2 Panchagaud ...	"	"
" 19 ...	Gayáwál... ...	"	"
" 20 ...	Girnárá	"	"
" 21 ...	Golak (degraded)...	"	Writers.
" 22 ...	Gomtiwál ...	"	"
" 23 ...	Gugali	"	"
" 24 ...	Gurav (degraded)..	"	Temple servants and Musicians.
" 25 ...	Jámbu (Jambusaria)	"	Priests.
" 26 ...	Jhárolá	"	"
" 27 ...	Kandolia	"	"
" 28 ...	Kánnava ...	"	"
" 29 ...	Kánya-kubja ...	"	"
" ...	1 Kanojiá ...	"	"
" ...	2 Saravaria ...	"	"
" 30 ...	Kapil	"	"
" 31 ...	Karhádá	"	"
" 32 ...	Karnátaki ...	"	"
" 33 ...	Káratiá (degraded) (Káyatiá)	"	"
" 34 ...	Karavatiá ...	"	"
" 35 ...	Khedával ...	"	"
" ...	1 Báj	"	"
" ...	2 Bhitrá ...	"	"
" 36 ...	Kokanastha (Chitpávan).	"	"

Castes and Tribes of Southern India Vol-i (1909) by Thurston Edgar "Tambala" listed under bramhin subcaste at page number 365

Tamballa, tambli, tambala, gurou and gurav are synonyms Mention at karnataka central ncbc list section 85

H.e.h. The Nizams Government Hyderabad District Gazetteers Gulbarga 1340 And 1345 F 1931 To 1936 A.d by Mazhar_husain Publication date 1940 page number 45 declaring gurav and tambli Or tambala has same meaning

Conclusion Drawn from the evidence that Gurav and Tambala are same and come under bramhin subcaste.

The sub-divisions of the Telugu Brāhmans are as follows :—

A.—Vaidiki.

1. Murikināḍu.
2. Telaganyam.
3. Velnāḍu.
4. Kasalnāḍu.
5. Karnakammalu.
6. Vēgināḍu.
7. Konesime.
8. Ārama Drāvida.
9. Ārādhya.
10. Prathamasāki.

B.—Niyogi.

1. Āruvela.
2. Nandavarikulu.
3. Kammalu.
4. Pesalavayalu.
5. Pranganāḍu.

C.—Tambala.

D.—Immigrants.

1. Pudur Drāvida.
2. Thummagunta Drāvida.

All these sections are endogamous, and will eat together, except the Tambalas, who correspond to the Gurukkals among the Tamil Brāhmans. Vaidikis are supposed to be superior to Niyōgis. The former do not generally grow moustaches, while the latter do. For srādh ceremonies, Niyōgis do not generally sit as Brāhmans representing the ancestors, Vaidikis being engaged for this purpose. In some places, *e.g.*, the Nandigama tāluk of the Kistna district, the Niyōgis are not referred to by the name Brāhman, Vaidikis being so called. Even Niyōgis themselves point to Vaidikis when asked about Brāhmans.

Velnāḍu, Murikināḍu, and Vēginādu seem to be territorial names, and they occur also among some of the non-Brāhman castes. The Ārādhyas are dealt with in a special article (*see* Ārādhya). Among the Karnakammas are certain sub-sections, such as Ōgōti and

59	Gondali,Ghondali, Gondaliga, Gondhali, Gondhalli	23
60	Goniga, Sadu Setty, Sadhu Chetty, Sadhu Setty,	82
	Sadhu Chetty, Sadhu Shetty, Telugu Chetty,	
	Telugu Chettiar, Telugu Shetty, Telugu Setty,	
	Telungupatti Chetty, Telungu Chetty, Telungu Chettiar,	
	24 Mane Telugu Shetty, 24 Mane Telugu Chetty,	
	24 Mane Telugu Chettiar, 24 Manai Telugu Shetty,	
	24 Manai Telugu Chetty, 24 Manai Telugu Chettiar,	
	Salaparu, Sanaparu, Sanapar, Salapar, Janapar,	
	Janapan,Janapachetty, Janapashetty, Janapasetty,	
	Gonichetty, Gonigamane	
61	Gosavi,Gosayi, Gosain, Atit	83
62	Gudigara	153
63	Gujar,Guzar	84
64	Gurav, Lingayat Gurav, Gurov, Tambli, Tamballa, Gurava,	85
	Gurou	
65	Halakki Vokkalu, Vakkal, Gram Vakkal,	54
	Gam Gowda, Gam Gawda, Gavada, Kare Vokkalu,	
	Kunchavakkal, Atte Vokkalu, Shilwakkal, Halakkivakkal	
66	Hanabaru, Krishna Golla, Anubaru, Atanabaru, Hanbar	88
	Hanabar	
67	Handervut	90
68	Handevazir	89
69	Haranshikari,Chigaribetegar, Vaghri, Wagiri,	24
	Nirshikari, Bagri, Baori, Phasachari,Vagri	
70	Helava,Holeva	25
71	Hindu Sadaru	184
72	Honniyar	91
73	Hoovadiga, Hugar, Hoogar, LingayatHugar/Hoogara	92

I.—AREA AND POPULATION. ۱ ـ رقبہ وآبادی

No. 15.—STATISTICS OF CHIEF CASTES—CENSUS 1340 F. (1931)

نمبر (۱۵) اعداد بلحاظ ذات مردم شماری سنہ ۱۳۴۰ف (سنہ ۱۹۳۱ع)

Serial No. سلسلہ نشان	Caste ذات	Strength تعداد	Where chiefly found مقامات جہاں عموماً پائے جاتے ہیں
	GULBARGA DIST. ضلع گلبرگہ شریف		
	Brahmanic Hindu. برہمن ہندو		
1	Bendar (Bedar) بدر (بیدر)	81,500	Throughout the District. ضلع تمام
2	Bhat (Bhatraj) بھاٹ (بھٹ راج)	3,042	Gulbarga, Seram, Yadgir, Shahabad and Tandur. گلبرگہ۔ سیڑم۔ یادگیر۔ شاہ آباد و تانڈور
3	Bhoi (Besta) بھوئی (بہشے)	35,243	Throughout the District. ضلع تمام
4	Bogam (Kasban) بوگم (کسبن)	6,670	do Except Seram, Andola and Afzalpur. ضلع تمام سوائے سیڑم۔ اندولہ و افضل پور
5	Brahman برہمن	32,832	Throughout the District. ضلع تمام
6	Burud (Medari) بروڑ (مداری)	2,585	do ,,
7	Darzi (Simpi) درزی (سمپی)	4,529	do ,,
8	Dhobi (Chakala) دھوبی (چاکلا)	10,038	do ,,
9	Earkala (Kaikadi) برکلہ (کیکاڑی)	6,476	do ,,
10	Gosain (Gosavi) گوسائی (گوسوی)	2,088	do ,,
11	Gujarati (Gurjar) گجراتی (گرجر)	744	Gulbarga, Yadgir, Shahpur, and Shahabad. گلبرگہ۔ یادگیر۔ شاہ پور و شاہ آباد
12	Gurav (Tambli) گراو (تمبلی)	6,224	Throughout the District except Aland, Bashirabad, and Afzalpur. ضلع تمام سوائے تانڈور۔ بشیرآباد و افضل پور
13	Hajjam (Mangala) حجام (منگلا)	11,189	Throughout the District. ضلع تمام
14	Julahi (Dewang, Sale) جولاہی (دیونگ۔ سیل)	20,208	do ,,
15	Kalal (Ediga, Goundla) کلال (ایڈیگا۔ گونڈلہ)	12,244	do ,,
16	Kapu (Kunbi) کاپو (کنبی)	42,846	do ,,

Gurav Affiliated as Shaiva bramhin in 1733 At Wai Mahitipatrak in detail regarding this meeting by K. B Upadhyay in 1913 Solapur Shree Dattaprasad Press .

॥ श्री कालीलिंग प्रसन्न. ॥

श्री जगद्गुरु शंकराचार्य यांचा शैव ब्राह्मण लोकांवरील खंडणी माफीचहल

माहिती पत्रक.

के. रा. रा. कालिनाथ अकलेश स्वामी उपाख्य मठ मेडर वा सोलापूर यांजकडून शैव ब्राह्मण मंडळींत कळविण्यात येतें की, श्री ज. शंकराचार्य मठ शृंगेरी यांना खंडणी देण्याचा प्रघात नाही. असें असतांना, अनेक ठिकाणी आद्यापि खंडणी देत नाहीं आणि कोठें कोठें माहिती नसल्यामुळें खंडणी वगैरे देण्यात आमें सबबीवरून मुद्दाम कळविण्यास येतें की वर्षे एकें वेळी श्री. ज. शंकराचार्य स्वस्थान शृंगेरी हे वर्षे गुरुपदी आले असतां स्वामी पाईंगडे सर्व स्वामी पाठवणारे लोकांपासून खंडणी घेतली. त्याप्रमाणें सर्व शैवब्राह्मण लोकांस बोलावून खंडणी मागू लागले त्यावेळीं तेथील राहणार के. र. नरोबा शैव ब्राह्मण यानें सांगितलेली आमी शिवाची पूजा करणारें ब्राह्मण असून आमचे प्रभूचा अवतार आपला आहे, तरी आमचेवर खंडणी नसावी अशी प्रार्थना विनंती अर्जि. त्यावर आचार्यांनी ब्राह्मण ओळखण्यावरून प्रश्न केले. आणि रा. नरोबा यांनी उत्तर दिले ते खाली लिहिल्याप्रमाणें:-

प्रश्न	उत्तर
कोणेवा	महादेव
को शाखा	पाशुपतशाखा
को गोत्रा	शिखंडीगोत्र
को प्रवरा	शैव, पाशुपात, सौमित्री, प्रवर
को नामधा	केशव नामधा
को वर्णी	शिव ब्राह्मण वर्णी

को आचारा	वैदिक आचारा
को धर्मा	ब्रह्मचर्य, गृहस्थाश्रम, वानप्रस्थ, चतुर्थाश्रमदिक्षा, इति, चतुर्थाश्रम धर्मा
को संस्कारा	षोडष संस्कारा
को कर्मा	आचार्य कर्मा
को दिक्षा	चतुर्थाश्रम, शिवयोगहंस, दिक्षा, पाणी ग्रारण.
को दंडा	शिव दंडा
को तर्पणा	शिव पर्णा
को कमंडलु	शिव कमंडलु
को उचारा	प्रश्न उचारा
को जप	अजपा गायत्रीहंस अघोर शिवमंत्र इति जपा
को तपा	ब्रह्मचारी तपा
को अनुष्ठाना	शिवउपनिषद, कैवल्य, उपनिषद. नारायणउपनिषद, इति अनुष्ठाना.
कोमहा वाक्या	तत्वमसी महावाक्य.
को पटा	शिवशंकरानंद स्वामी परमगुरु. शंकरानंद स्वामी परात्पर गुरु अनंतानंद स्वामी महागुरु.
को पंथा	नाथ पंथा
को मान्या	दक्षिण मान्या
को मटा	शृंगेरी मटा
को सांप्रदाया	अपर सांप्रदाया
को नामा	भारती नामा
को पदा	रामेश्वर क्षेत्र पद
को दैवता	आदिवराह दैवता

को देवी — कामाक्ष देवी
को आचार्य — शृंगेरी शंकराचार्य

येणें प्रमाणें प्रश्नाची उत्तरें दिल्यावर स्वामीनी शैवब्राह्मण आहेत असें सांगितले हा लेख वाई मु. शके १८३३ या अहि सन १९११ चे खानेसुमारीत मौजे वाठे ताल्लुक सोलापुर येथील खानेसु-मारीचे अधिकाऱ्यानी शैवब्राह्मण मंडळीस नाम विचारल्यावरून आम्ही शैव ब्राह्मण आहोत असें सांगितले. परंतु अधिकाऱ्यानी तसें लिहून घेण्याचे नाकारले व तुम्ही शुद्र आहात आणि तुमचे नाते गुरुत्व औदुंबर येथील नाते शैव ब्राह्मण आहे गुरुत्व ही जात नव्हें धंदा आहे. म्हणून त्याप्रमाणें चौकशी मे कलेक्टर साहेब बहादूर जि० सोलापुर यानपुर्ढे होऊन ता. ६ मार्च सन १९११ रोजी अखेर निकाल झाला की ब्राह्मण हक्क ब्राह्मण असे दाखल करण्याचे अंमल तर खानेसुमारीचे अधिकाऱ्यानी तसेंलिहीले.

पासणगांव मुक्कामी श्री. ज. शंकराचार्यांची स्वारी आली असता ता. १६ आक्टोंबर सन १९१२ इ० रोजी या आमचे वडीलबंधु रामेश्वर रामेश्वर हे दर्शनास गेले आणि स्वामीस गुरुत्व हे कोण असें विचारल्यावरून म्हणाले की अपल्यांस शास्त्रांचे ब्राह्मण असून त्यांचा यजुर्वेद आहे आणि त्यांनी गुरुकुल अथवा शैव ब्राह्मण असें म्हणतात. कोणी तरी कर्म भ्रष्ट झाल्यामुळे नीच संगी पडून गुरुचे गुरुत्व करून टाकले पण त्यांना शास्त्र आहे तर निःसंशय ते ब्राह्मणच आहेत शूद्र कधीही होऊ शकत नाही हे वरमान त्यांनी आम्हाला दिलेले आहेत

विशेष सूचना:—वरील लेखावरून समजू शकाल की आम्ही कुंभार वगैरे पूर्वी शैवब्राह्मण समाजांत चतुर्थिक संबंधी विद्वान, ज्ञानसंपन्न कर्म शुद्ध जेवी आणि अद्यापि शृंगेरी मांतापर्यंत आपला सन्मान कायम आहे. असें होते सत्यता शंकराचार्यांनीही दाखले करून गण्याहिंदुस्थानांतील शैवब्राह्मण समाजाची निजी शोचनिय स्थिती झाली आहे वो केवळ शूद्रोपासनेही इतकी वर्षे पडत्या काळें कारण अविद्या विद्येची योग्यता कार नेही आहे विद्येच्या योगें ज्ञान प्राप्त होते. ज्ञाना योगें सत्कर्मे घडतात कर्मा सत्कर्मानें मोक्ष प्राप्त होते करिता सर्वजनी जाति अभिमान सोडून विद्या संपादन करून शुद्ध कर्मे करावीत अशी आशा आहे.

श्रीकाशीलिंग प्रसन्न.

काशीनाथ भगवंतस्वामी उपाध्ये मठ नंदूर यांजकडून समस्त शुद्धशैव ब्राह्मण-बंधूंस कळविण्यांत येते की. आपली मूळ उत्पत्ति परमात्मा श्रीशंकर यांनी आपले सेवेसाठी करून निर्माण केली आणि त्या पुरुषाचें नांव शैवाचार्य असें ठेवून स्वाधीन करून पुष्कळ दिवस सेवा घेतली; नंतर वंशविस्तार करण्याकरितां श्रीशंकर यांनी त्यास आज्ञा केली, त्यावरून गोत्र, प्रवरादि, वगैरे महान् महान् ऋषींचे वंशज पुरातनांतली आहे. त्याबद्दल येथें जास्त लिहिण्याचें कारण नाही. आतां शुद्धशैव ब्राह्मणांना गुरुत्व ही संज्ञा कालमानानें पडली आहे. खरोखर गुरुत्व ही जात नसून धंदा होय. आपला वर्ण अगदी उच्च प्रतीचा असून हल्ली फारच जीर्णदशेस येऊन पोहोचला आहे याचें कारण अज्ञान. कारण लहानपणापासून आईबाप मुलाच्या (बाळाच्या) सारखे सांगलें लक्ष देत नाहींत व त्यास आचारविचार हे काय व कसे आहेत, याची आळस खुद्दां करून देत नाहींत व बाहेरून स्वामी मठाधिकारी वगैरे अशा लोकांकडून त्यांना योग्य शिक्षण मिळत नाहीं. म्हणूनच लहानपणापासून अविचार व अज्ञान हे गुण जडून ते दृढ झाले आहेत म्हणून आपला वर्ण अशा स्थितीस येऊन पोहचला आहे करितां आम्हीं परिश्रमानें पुरातनग्रंथ शिवपुराण, शैवागम, शैवनिर्णय, शैवग्रंथ वगैरे ग्रन्थाच्या आधारें व रा. रा. व्यंकटराव रामराव पाटीलकुलकर्णी तालुकर, रा. रा. संताजी मल्हारराव पाटील वेवलेकर, व रा. रा. भवानीराव पुराव डांगे सोलापूरकर वगैरे मण्डळींकडून सर्वांची मदत घेऊन स्थूलदृष्या ग्रन्थ सोलापूर येथें "श्रीदत्तप्रसाद" छापखान्यांत छापून तयार करीत आहों त्याची किंमत १ रुपया शिवाय टपालखर्च २ आणे ठेविला आहे त्यास घेण्याची इच्छा असेल त्यांनीं खालील पत्त्यावर मागवून घ्यावा. या ग्रन्थामध्यें आपली उत्पत्ति श्री व कोणापासून व आपणास षोडश कर्मांचा अधिकार कसकसा आहे, व आपणकर्म, धर्म, विचार कसे करावे इत्यादि विस्तारपूर्वक लिहिलें आहे.

विशेष सूचना:—

आपण दुसऱ्या वर्णाचें अन्न घेऊं नये व अधर्मानें वागूं नये, अविचार करूं नये, जरी कोणी वरील नियमाप्रमाणें वागत नसेल तर त्यास सर्वांनीं बहिष्कार, दण्ड, वगैरेच्या रूपानें त्याची अधर्मस्थिती सुधारावी. आपणास कोणी गोत्र, शाखा, वेद वगैरे विचारल्यास खालील कोष्टकांत लिहिल्याप्रमाणें आहे.

प्रवर.	गोत्र	वेद.	शाखा.	पंथ.	धर्म.
सद्योजात	साङ्कायन	सामवेद	पाशुपत.	शैवब्राह्मण	हिंदु
वामदेव	तपोधन	,,	,,	,,	,,
अघोर	ईश्वर	,,	,,	,,	,,
तत्पुरुष	भारद्वाज	,,	,,	,,	,,
ईशान	रुद्र	,,	,,	,,	,,

येणेप्रमाणें प्रत्येक मनुष्यानें अगदीं अवश्य वागावें कळावें.

काशीनाथ भगवंतस्वामी उपाध्ये,
पेठ कसबा घर नं. ५०७ सोलापूर.

[श्रीदत्तप्रसाद 'स्टीमप्रेस' सोलापूर.]

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The Gurav temple priests of Maharashtra

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THE GURAV TEMPLE PRIESTS OF MAHARASHTRA*[1]

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The state of Maharashtra with a population of over sixty-three million, is culturally and geographically a bridge between northern (Uttarapatha) and the southern (Dakshinapatha) Hinduism.[2] The ancient trade routes between the north and the south pass tortuously over the lower hills and through the occasional flats of the western districts of Maharashtra. Because of its unique placement, Maharashtra possesses the common elements of both of these traditions within Hinduism and gives the area a culturally distinct character. Thus, people worship both Shiva and Vishnu almost equally and the traditional rivalry between the Shaivite and Vaishnavite sects found in the south, and the recognisable reluctance on the part of the vania (vaishya) castes of Gujarat (to the north of Maharashtra) to worship Shiva is absent in Maharashtra.[3]

Patterns of caste groupings, eating habits and religious customs including marriage also reflect this blend.[4] As in most parts of India, *jatidharma* (caste duty) is the mainstay of Marathi society and people thus fall into numerous castes and sub-castes (*jatis* and *upajatis*) in their social, religious and cultural interaction.[5] Traditionally, the *jajmani* system known in Marathi as *Balute* (*Baluta*) made a village of cluster of villages self-sufficient.[6]

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* This paper is dedicated to the memory of Günther Dietz Sontheimer (1934-1992), an outstanding researcher in the folk culture of Maharashtra.

1 The author is grateful to Drs G. Bailey, M. Vicziany, V. Thonte and R. Desai for their helpful suggestions, to Ranga Patlwan for the Manuscript 'Sthulshaivagama', to Omdatta Arya for the book *Gaurav* and to Ganesh Suradkar for the manuscript 'Laghu Shaivagama'. I am also grateful to La Trobe University for two travel grants for the field-work in India.

2 Aryavata (Uttarapatha) and Dakshinapatha are the two main natural divisions of India divided by the Vindhya mountains. The division has been recognised since the time of the Manusmriti. G. Buhler (trans.) , *The Laws of Manu*, in M. Muller (ed.), *The Sacred Books of the East*, Vol. XXV, [O.U.P., 1886], (rep. Motilal Banarasidass, 1964), pp. 2, 22; see also Government of Maharashtra, *Apala Maharashtra* (Bombay, Government Printer, 1985), p. 31.

3 I. Karve, *Maharashtra: Land and its People* (Maharashtra State Gazetteer, Bombay, Government Printer, 1968), p. 184.

4 E. Zelliott and A. Feldhaus, 'Marathi Religions' in M. Eliade (ed.), *Encyclopaedia of Religions* , Vol. 9 (New York, Macmillan, 1987), p. 190.

5 P. G. Sahasrabuddhe, *Maharashtra Sanskriti* (Pune, Continental Prakashan, 1979), p. 628.

6 S. V. Ketkar (ed.), *Maharashtriya Jnanakosha* (Nagpur, Maharashtriya Jnanakosha Mandal, 1920), Vol. A, p. 527.

Inscriptional evidence suggests that this system, with its roots in ancient India,[7] was in existence in Maharashtra by 1500 A.D.[8] The Gurav priestly caste with whom we are concerned in this essay forms the ninth *balutedar* in the scheme. Maharashtra's *balutedar* system usually consisted of a total of twelve service castes, each of them associated with a specific range of village duties.

The function of the Gurav priestly caste is to manage and maintain the temple and also to act as temple priests. Their current estimated population in Maharashtra is between one and one and a half million, between one and a half and two and a half percent of the total population. The priestly Guravs of this study are distinguished from other Guravs and other non-brahmin priests who also call themselves 'Gurav' by a number of characteristics: they are the numerically dominate Gurav; they are to be found throughout Maharashtra; they do not, as a rule, officiate at small village shrines; they are to be found performing rituals at all kinds of Shiva temples, including large ones; and while they are regarded by Maharashtrian society as shudras (low castes) they all claim to the Shaiva-brahmins. The final point, namely the claims and counterclaims surrounding the Gurav, first alerted me to the subject of my research. In the present essay, this priestly caste of Gurav is also referred to by the name of Shaiva Gurav, Shaiva brahmin or Devalaka brahmin. This is because in their historical and religious literature, the caste has used all these names to describe themselves.

The Gurav priestly caste of Maharashtra seems to be a unique phenomenon in India.[9] In northern India, for example, the *jajmani* system in its priestly aspect also involves high-caste landlords making customary payments in kind to their priestly clients. These clients, in turn, reciprocate by providing various kinds of religious and temple services. Throughout northern India, in so far as I have been above to ascertain, these priestly clients are all brahmins. The same appears to be true in south India.[10] However, in the case of Maharashtra, the priests in the *jajmani* or *balute* system include non-brahmins like the Gurav. These Gurav priests are no less important to Maharashtra's *jajmani* system than the brahmin priests. This paper seeks to explain how this anomaly of the *jajmani* system arose in this part of India: specifically, how far back can we trace the special position of

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7 D. D. Kosambi, *The Culture and Civilisation of Ancient India in Historical Outline* (London, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1965), p. 20.

8 A. Chandorkar, 'Bhojashaka 410 teel eka Tamraputa' (A copper plate in Bhojashaka 410), *Bharat Itihas Samshodhak Mandal Quarterly*, 1923-24, p. 50. Chandorkar describes a copper-plate known as the Pirwadi Copper-Plate which details the trial of a Ganga Naik in the hands of the twelve *balutedars* of the village. While the date of the inscription is controversial (it could have been written any time between 1200-1500 A.D.), it establishes the Gurav as a *balutedar* at least as early at 1500 A.D. in Maharashtra.

9 H. A. Gould, *The Hindu Caste System* (Delhi, Chanakya Publications, 1987, ch. 4.

10 E. Thurston and K. Rangachari, *Castes and Tribes of Southern India* (Delhi, Cosmo Publications, rep. 1975).

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non-brahmin Gurav priests? How did they arise? Why were they tolerated? These questions need to be raised because to a non-Maharashtrian the very idea of a non-brahmin priest performing rituals in any temple is preposterous. The thought is a shocking contravention of the very strict observance of ritual purity in Indian temples, and even within Maharashtra itself the role of non-brahmin Gurav priests appears to draw attention to all kinds of contradictions within mainstream Hinduism.

The Gurav in literature

In my search to explain the origins of the non-brahmin Gurav priests, I first turned to various literary sources. There I found the word 'Gurav' in a number of places.[11] The *Maharashtra Shabdakosha*[12] (Maharashtra Dictionary) and the *Marathi Vyutpattikosha*[13] (Marathi Etymological Dictionary) both state that the word Gurav came from the Kannada word 'Gorava' meaning a Shaiva mendicant or Shiva himself in the guise of a mendicant. The information about Gurav occupations, food habits, dress, contained in these sources portrays the Gurav as a shudra ministrant in temples. The stereotype which emerges from this literature can be summarised as follows:

> The Gurav is a non-brahmin priestly class among shudras and is involved in the worship of Shiva and village deities such as Maruti, Khandoba and Ambabai. The main divisions among the Gurav and Shaiva Gurav, Kadu Gurav, Lingayat Gurav, Bhavik Burav and Fain Gurav. Unlike the Shaivas whose diacritical mark is three horizontal lines of sandalwood paste on the forehead, and Vaishnavas, whose mark consists of three vertical lines, the Gurav put a sandalwood dot on their forehead. As a *balutedar*, the Gurav is the official worshipper of the village deity. The Gurav are vegetarians and their staple food is shorghum (jvari), pulse and vegetables. Lingayat Gurav wear a Lingam on the necklace around their neck whereas others wear the sacred thread. Hugar, Jeer and Malgar are subdivisions with Lingayat Gurav. As official worshippers (*pujaris*) of the village deity, many Gurav have land bequeathed

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11 R. V. Russell and Hira Lal, *Tribes and Castes of the Central Provinces of India* (Delhi, Rajdhani Book Centre, rep. 1975), Vol. 3, p. 175; see also J. Grant Duff, *History of the Mahrattas* [1826], (ed.) J. D. Guha (New Delhi, Associated Publishing House, 1971), Vol. 1, p. 483; G. M. Kalelkar, *Mumbai Ilakhyateel Jati* (Baroda, Sayaji Granthamala, no. 138, 1928), p. 73; S. V. Ketkar, *op. cit.*, Vol. A, p. 168, M. M. Tanksale, 'Asa Zala Gurav Samajacha Uday', *Gurav Samaj Rashtriya Adhiveshana Paithan*, Commemorative volume (ed.) S. S. Khandalkar (Aurangabad, Nath Mudranalaya, 1990), p. 1, Y. R. Date and C. G. Karve (eds), *Maharashtra Vaksampradaya Kosha* (Pune, Maharashtra Koshamandala Ltd, 1947), p. 410; *Gazetteer of the Bombay Presidency* (Bombay, Govt. Central Press, 1884), Vol. XXI, Belgaum,. p. 106; 1884, Vol. XXIII, Bijapur, p. 264; 1890, Kolhapur, p. 142.

12 Y. R. Date and C. G. Karve (eds), *Maharashtra Shabdakosha* (Poona, Varada Books, 1934), Vol. 3, p. 1006.

13 K. P. Kulkarni (ed.), *Marathi Vyutpattikosha* (Pune, Shri Lekhan Wachan Bhandar, 1963), p. 261.

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to them. The priests of the Gurav are Maratha brahmins to whom they show great respect. The other occupations of the Gurav include making and selling leaf-plates, flowers and Bel leaves (Aegle marmelas) used in the worship of Shiva, acting as village musicians (blowing conch shells, playing drums, trumpets and other musical instruments) and making the 'Bashing' (coronet of flowers) that the bridegroom wears. The Gurav are also known to be the spiritual leaders of the *kalavats* (dancing girls) in Goa. In Goa and the Konkan areas of Maharashtra one of the duties of the Gurav in many temples is to solicit omens from the idol and to seek answers to specific questions asked by the devotee.[14] Such a shamanistic ritual is still followed in several temples in the region.

A number of problems arise from this stereotype. First, the extant literature suggests that all 'Guravs' form a homogenous group. Secondly, this 'ideal type' wrongly assumes that the social identity of the village priest who calls himself 'Gurav' is the same as the temple priest by the same name. Thirdly, it confuses temple ministrants who are Jains and Lingayats with the Gurav priestly caste. These Jain and Lingayat 'Gurav' only call themselves 'Gurav' because that word has assumed the generic meaning of 'someone who officiates in a temple'.

While the stereotype of the 'Gurav' suffers from gross over-simplification, it does recognise some internal differentiation within a Gurav conglomerate. However, the differentiation is addresses is largely spurious. The sources referred to talk of several divisions and sub-divisions (castes and sub-castes) among the Gurav. Grant Duff,[15] who classified the Gurav as shudras, thought that major sub-divisions among them reflected territorial divisions. Thus according to him, the Warade come from Berar, the Telanga from Telugu country, the Dakshine from the Deccan and the Marwari from Marwar. Enthoven,[16] on the other hand, lists the following endogamous divisions among the Gurav:

1. Shaiva Gurav: also called Nagari, Nilkantha and Swayambhu Gurav.
2. Kadu Gurav: also known as Junnare, Kotsane or Gasrat.
3. Lingayat Gurav with Hugar, Jeer and Malgar as the main sub-divisions.
4. Konkani or Bhavik Gurav.
5. Jain Gurav from the Malvan *taluka* of Ratnagiri district.

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14 R. N. Kelkar, 'Konkan Prantateel Gurav Samaj' (The Gurav Community in Konkan Area), *Bharat Itihas Samshodhan Mandal Quarterly*, Vol. 60, (1981), p. 17.

15 Grant Duff, *op. cit.*, (ed.), Guha, Vol. 1, p. 483.

16 R. E. Enthoven, *Tribes and Castes of Bombay* (Bombay, Govt. Printer, 1920), Vol. 2, p. 27.

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As I have already suggested, the enthnohistorians such as Grant Duff, Enthoven and Thurston wrongly regarded all castes bearing the name 'Gurav' as sub-castes of a main Gurav caste. This mis-grouping was probably facilitated by the manner in which their data was collected. The assistance they obtained in their researches invariably came from educated English-speaking brahmins. The latter were (and remain today) totally indifferent to the caste affiliations of temple priests who are inferior to them. To the Marathi brahmins, all non-brahmins were shudras. This seems to have led to a confusion in the documented history between the Gurav priestly caste and the Gurav priests defined as a profession adopted by all manner of castes for financial gains.

To clarify this point, it is essential to examine the caste status of each of the Gurav groups, at this juncture. The Jain Gurav is a very small community restricted to the Malvan district of Konkan, coastal Maharashtra. As described by Enthoven and by Kelkar,[17] they appear to be descendants of Jains who took to the worship of Shiva under the influence of Lingayatism. In this regard, it is interesting to note that many Shiva temples in Konkan contain a Shiva-Linga and another stone or just two stones in the inner *sanctum sanctorum* (*Garbha-Griha*). One of the stones is called 'Kashikalyani Brahmana' ('The Brahmin for Benares', referring obviously to Shiva) while the other is called 'the Jain Brahmana'. The latter is taken by the Gurav priest of the temple to represent their Kula-Purusha (male founder of the clan). This may have been originally an image of a Jain Teerthankara (Creator of religion).[18] The Jain Gurav are therefore called 'Gurav' only because they act as temple priests. They are Hindus only because they observe caste endogamy and they worship Shiva. But in all other ways they are Jain.

A similar argument can be advanced for the Lingayat Gurav. The Lingayat Gurav obviously did not exist as an identifiable group before the rise of Lingayatism around 1170 A.D.. As a reformist sect, Lingayatism asserted, among other things, the equality of all human beings a recruited people of low-caste in sizeable numbers in Karnataka. The Hugars (florists), Malgars (copper and brass smiths) and Jeers are among such people. With the persecution of Lingayats in thirteenth century Karnataka, many of them fled to the neighbouring districts of Maharashtra and some of them became temple priests. For the Lingayats, who were staunch Shaivites and well versed in Shaiva rituals, it would not have been difficult to obtain such positions. This would explain the inclusion by Enthoven of Hugar and others among the Lingayat Gurav. Again, as in the case of Jain Gurav, the word Gurav here once again refers to the profession of 'temple priest' and not a separate caste of Gurav. The situation of the Koli (fisherman) and Maratha ministrants of temples is even more clear — only those members of the family who minister to the temple are called Gurav, other family members are not.

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17 Kelkar, *op. cit.*

18 *Loc. cit.*

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Like the Jain Gurav, the Bhavik Gurav[19] are also found in Konkan. They minister only to the village deities (*gram-devata*) and do not work in the Shiva temples of Konkan. Thus, in Konkan villages, a Lingayat Gurav looks after the Shiva temple whereas the Bhavik Gurav ministers to the deities such as Nagoba, Khandoba, Vetal, Bhairoba, at small shrines usually sited on the outskirts of the village.[20] Unlike the Shaiva-Gurav (the priestly caste of Gurav, which concerns me in this paper) the Bhavik Gurav are generally unable to trace their history beyond a few generations. They also have very little modern education or a knowledge of Sanskrit and are non-vegetarian as a rule. They may also drink alcohol. The customs of the Bhavik Gurav are very similar to those of the Maratha and Kunbi communities. It is highly likely that these Gurav came from Maratha or similar castes and were recognised as priests at a later date. They thus represent a development in the Hindu tradition which mimics and parallels the high-caste temple ministrants in the larger temples in the town. The brahmins were probably unwilling to minister to village deities not assimilated into the classical pantheon.

In summary then, the Lingayat, Jain, Koli, Maratha and the Bhavik Gurav cannot be aggregated into a single Gurav caste. The common denominator is that all these 'Gurav' have the same profession — they are temple priests. Hence they acquired the title 'Gurav'. On the other hand, there is evidence to suggest that the Shaiva Gurav, who insist on calling themselves Shaiva-brahmins, are probably the only Gurav who belong to a single self-contained 'caste'. Their position in Marathi society is unique. Firstly, they are acknowledged by other Gurav and by the brahmins to be superior to all other Gurav. Secondly, they are well educated, some with university degrees and a number of them have a working knowledge of Sanskrit. Most importantly, like the brahmins, most Shaiva Gurav have a Gotra identity, an essential criterion for every brahmin. Their customs are similar to those of the Dravida and Deshastha brahmins: they wear a sacred thread and have a conception ritual similar to that of the brahmins. Their priests are also brahmins. However, Gurav rituals, including weddings, are performed by the brahmins in the Puranokta way, as prescribed in the Puranas, not in the Vedokta way (following the Vedas), the latter being reserved strictly for the brahmin castes.[21] Much of the confusion surrounding the discussion about the Gurav

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19 It is interesting to note that etymologically, the word 'Bhavik' can mean 'one who has become', i.e. those who have adopted 'Guravhood' as a profession.

20 Nagoba is the serpent (Cobra) deity. Khandoba is an incarnation of Shiva, probably a local godling in Maharashtra and Karnataka that merged with Shiva. Vetal and Bhairoba (Biroba) are spirits associated with Shiva but are also tantric deities. The suffix 'ba' means father.

21 There were bitter disputes between Marathi brahmins and other castes in the late 18th and early 19th centuries over the right to recite and hear Vedic chants, known as Vedokta. The brahmins maintained that Vedokta was their exclusive right and in Kaliyuga (the age of decline) the kshatriya and vaishya castes became extinct, thus leaving only two *varnas*: the brahmins and shudras. The brahmins insisted that for the rituals of the non-brahmin castes, only Puranic (Puranokta) rituals with less sanctity could be used. See M. Israel and N. K. Wagle, *Religion and Society in Maharashtra* (Toronto, Centre of South Asian Studies, University of Toronto, 1987).

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priests' caste arises from the inability of the British to understand that western India had no tradition of using family surnames. When various groups in society described themselves as Gurav, the British assumed a common family ancestry when in reality Maharashtrians used the word 'Gurav' merely to describe a whole collection of social groups who simply performed the 'Gurav' function (priests' function) but without necessarily belonging to the one caste.[22]

The Shaiva-Gurav have also produced three *Jatipuranas* (clan-history books) and a recent booklet in support of their claim to brahminic origin. It is to this discrepancy between the perceived status of the Shaiva Gurav as shudras on one hand and their attempts to legitimise and reinforce their brahmin status on the other hand that I wish to devote the rest of this paper. In doing so, I also look at the origin of the word Gurav, which is partly related to the Shaiva-Gurav's claim to brahminhood. I believe that this is necessary because it may lead us to the dawn of Indian history, the possible divisions between brahmins even at that time and the struggle between Aryan and non-Aryan forces, manifested in the initial schism and later union of Shaivism and Aryan religion.

Origin of the term 'Gurav' and the Gurav in history

The origin of the term 'Gurav' is problematic and obscure. However, it is possible to make several observations. Educated and culturally knowledgeable Shaiva-Gurav maintain[23] that the word is the nominative plural of the word Guru, meaning teacher and spiritual leader.[24] They insist that in the distant past, all Gurav, as worshippers of Shiva, were held in high esteem in society and were regarded as spiritual guides by the common people. These claims are important as an indication of the attempts by the Shaiva-Gurav to legitimise their position in relation to that of the brahmins who have always looked down upon them. Another possible origin for the

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22 Tanksale, *op. cit.* Tanksale, a Gurav himself, gives the following classification of Gurav names according to their profession:
(a) Temple associated names: Bhagwan, Nagesh, Siddheshwar, Ekwire, Jagadamb, Markandeya.
(b) Names according to their profession as priests: Upadhye, Pande, Acharya, Pujari, Rajguru, Gurav.
(c) Names according to gift of land: Patil, Mokashi, Deshmukh, Kulkarni, Inamdar.
(d) Names according to military professions: Aglave, Jadhav, Gayakwad, Shinde, Thorat, Bhosale, Rane, Pawar, Kale.
(e) Names according to skills: Nilkanth, Tanksale.

23 Personal communication with many educated Gurav. In Sanskrit, the plural Guravah comes from the singular Guruh.

24 Etymologically the word Gurav could have originated from the old Dravidian word Kor (meaning to make a sound), see T. Burrow and M. B. Emeneau, *A Dravidian Etymological Dictionary* (Oxford University Press, 1961). Philologically the following transformation could thus be feasible:
Kor → Gor → Gorava → Gurav.

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word Gurav could be related to the strong association Shiva worship has with the 'Guru' tradition in the Nath cult. Shiva himself has been described as the Guru of the Gods.[25] It is, therefore, possible that the person who holds the right to worship Shiva first is called 'Gurav'. It is significant that even the most orthodox brahmins do not deny the Gurav's right to perform the first and last worship of the day in the Shiva temple. In this context, the word Gurav could mean 'of the Guru'.

The word Gurav does not appear in the authoritative Sanskrit dictionaries such as *Shabdakalpadruma, Vachaspatyam* and others.[26] It is also unlikely to be of Prakrit origin because it is not found in Pali and Prakrit dictionaries.[27] However, the etymological dictionary of the Marathi language traces the word to the old Kannada language word 'Gorava'. Kittel's *Kannada-English Dictionary*[28] also lists the word 'Gorava' as meaning a 'beggar of the Shaiva sect or Shiva himself in the guise of a beggar'. Since Shiva, the titulary deity of the Gurav caste, is described in the *Puranas* as a wandering mendicant with a begging bowl in his hand, it may be that the devotees of this aspect of Shiva were called 'Goravas'.

The evidence seems to suggest that the word Gurav is the Marathi rendering of the Kannada word Gorava. This is given credence by the evidence found in stone inscriptions in the Kannada language. An inscription dated 804 A.D. describes the visit of the Rashtrakuta king Govinda III to the temple of Rameshwaram in Karnataka. Altekar, in his book on the Rashtrakutas makes a point of quoting this inscription and some others[29] in an effort to prove the antiquity of the Gurav. The inscription deals with the gift of land by Govinda III to Shivadhari, a Gorava who was the official worshipper at this temple. The second inscription Altekar quotes is the one at Mantrawadi in Dharwad district. This stone inscription asks the Goravas to lead a life of strict celibacy; this suggests that in addition to their role as advisers to the Karnataka kings in religious and educational matters, they

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25 The *Shabdakalpadruma*, Vol. 2, 340 quotes the following hymn about Shiva: 'Adidevo Mahadevo Devesho Devabhrdguruh'. I am grateful to Tarktirtha Narayanshastri Sahakari for suggesting this interpretation. Shiva has also been described as the father of the world: see the first stanza of the Raghuvansha of Kalidasa: Jagatah Pitarou Vande Parvati-Parameshwarau (I bow to Parvati and Shiva, the father and mother of the world).

26 T. Bhattacharya (ed.), *Vachaspatyam* (Varanasi, Chaukhamba Sanskrit series, 1962). See also Suryakanta, *Practical Vedic Dictionary* (New Delhi, O.U.P., 1981); M. Monier-Williams, *Sanskrit English Dictionary* [1960], (rep. Delhi, Motilal Banarasidass, 1986).

27 T. W. Rhys-Davies and W. Stede (eds), *Pali-English Dictionary* (London, Pali Text Society, Routledge, Kegan Paul, 1972). See also F. Edgerton, *Buddhist Hybrid Sanskrit Grammar and Dictionary* (rep. Delhi, Motilal Banarasidass, 1972); D. C. Sircar, *Indian Epigraphical Glossary* (Delhi, Motilal Banarasidass, 1966).

28 F. Kittell, *Kannada-English Dictionary* (Mangalore, Basel Mission Book and Tract Depository, 1894).

29 A. S. Altekar, *The Rashtrakutas and their Times* (Poona, Oriental Book Agency, 1934), (rep. 1967), p. 293. Altekar cites the following inscriptions: Fleet 1881: 127, Fleet 1883: 256, Fleet 1945: 198. The Rashtrakutas ruled not only in Maharashtra and Karnataka but also in parts of southern Andhra Pradesh at one stage.

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were expected to exemplify, in their personal life style, a high moral character. Finally, Altekar mentions that the Ganga ruler Butuga II appointed a Gorava to worship a tablet raised to commemorate his pet dog which had been killed by a mighty boar.[30] These inscriptions point to the special status of the Goravas at the time: they were beneficiaries of gifts of land from the king (Rajadanam) in exchange for which they provided special ritual services.

In addition to this inscriptional evidence the work of modern historians like Basavraja[31] and Lorenzen[32] establishes that the Goravas acted as priests in the non-Vaishnavite temples of Kalamukha by 900 A.D. Basavraja talks of the Goravas in connection with the worship in the non-Vaishnavite temples in Karnataka during the reign of the Rashtrakuta and the Gangas while Lorenzen alludes to the highly exalted position of the Goravas who were Shaivite ascetics of the Kalamukha sect and who were generally responsible for the upkeep and management of the Shiva temples.

The question that remains is whether the Kannada Gorava is the same as the Marathi Gurav. While it is difficult to prove this conclusively, available evidence suggests that such may be the case. Several factors point in this direction. The words are very similar and so are the functions of the two. Moreover, Maharashtra and Karnataka did not exist as separate political entities during this time; rather they were part of the one state. Finally, during interviews with contemporary Gurav in the border area of the two states, it was pointed out to me that the words Gurav and Gorava mean one and the same thing.[33] While the temple priests in Maharashtra are called Gurav, their relatives in Karnataka are called 'Goravas'. Thus the words Gurav and Gorava must refer to a single caste of temple priests found in western India.

In Maharashtra, the earliest mention of a Gurav temple priest comes in the stone inscription at Paithan in Aurangabad district. While it cannot be accurately dated, the writing is believed to have been inscribed around 1140

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30 From these inscriptions Altekar makes a somewhat surprising observation: 'It would therefore be permissible to conjecture that Goravas were originally non-Aryan, and very probably Dravidian priests, who continued to officiate at the temples of deities who were non-Aryan. Later on they may have been allowed to be associated with Aryan temples and gods as well.' However, apart from showing the elevated position the Goravas enjoyed in the society of the time, I do not see how such a conclusion can be arrived at.

31 K. R. Basavraja, *History and Culture of Karnataka* (Dharwad, Chalukya Publications, 1984), p. 505.

32 D. N. Lorenzen, *The Kapalikas and Kalamukhas* [1972], 2nd ed. (Delhi, Motilal Banarasidass, 1991), p. 115.

33 (a) Interview with Ranga Pailwan (Rangnath Balwant Upadhye) of Solapur. A Shaiva-Gurav by birth, his parents came from Karnataka where his father and grandfather were priests. Their family name, 'Upadhye' in fact means 'a professional priest' His cousins are still practicing priests in Karnataka. His elder brother is well versed in all Shastras (Vedashastrasampanna) and gives religious discourses (Pravarchana) and Kirtanas in Karnataka.

(b) Professor G. V. Tagare, a well-known Sanskritist and Puranic scholar has written to me that the Gurav community is the same in Maharashtra and Karnataka and many are in fact related. In Karnataka they are called Goravas.

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A.D. It deals with the division of income at the Someshwar temple and states that the Gurav be given a certain amount of money for the worship and maintenance of the temple.[34] A second inscription is located at Ambejogai in Beed district and has been accurately dated to 1228 A.D. in the reign of the Yadav King Sindhana. It deals with the grant of food grains to the Gurav for preparation of offerings for daily worship and for special worship on auspicious occasions.[35]

Other evidence about the Shaiva-Gurav comes from texts in old Marathi. Books in the Marathi language (Maharashtri and Maharatti in the older forms) did not appear until after 1200 A.D. The *Leelacharitra* by Mhaimbhat dated 1283 A.D., considered to be one of the very first books, deals with the life of and the miracles performed by Chakradharswami, the founder of the Mahanubhava sect. It throws light on the social and religious conditions in Maharashtra at that time and mentions the Gurav and his wife 'Gurveen' a number of times. According to it, the Gurav and his wife were responsible for cleaning and performing worship in the Shiva temple. Chakradharswami is quoted as saying, 'God does not belong only to the Gurav, he belongs to everyone',[36] a statement which contextually suggests that the Gurav were selective in admitting people to the temple. The *Leelacharitra* also makes it clear that the brahmins looked down upon the Gurav and did not drink water at their hands.[37]

In his book *The Yadavas and their times*, Verma[38] discusses the religious and social conditions during the Yadava dynasty in twelfth and thirteenth century Maharashtra. He is of the opinion that the Gurav were probably absorbed into the Vaishya *varna* at this time. Thus the Gurav were prohibited from partaking of food at the 'Shraddha' ceremony in a brahmin's house. Their main function was to look after the bodily comforts of the deities whose temples they tended. From the evidence cited above, it would be reasonable to conclude that in Maharashtra, the worship and maintenance of many Shaivite temples was in the hands of the Gurav by the twelfth and thirteenth centuries.

It should be noted, however, that the word Gorava in the Karnataka inscriptions has been replaced with the word Gurav in the Maharashtra inscriptions and in the Marathi language books. All the Maharashtra inscriptions are dated after 1140 A.D. Therefore, the conversion from Gorava to Gurav may have taken place somewhere between 800 to 1100 A.D., during

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34 S. G. Tulpule (ed.), *Pracheen Marathi Koreev Lekh* (Ancient Marathi Inscriptions) (Pune, Pune Uni. Press, 1963), p. 505.

35 *Ibid.*, p. 118.

36 V. B. Kolate (ed.), *Leelacharita of Mhaimbhat* (Bombay, Maharashtra Rajya Sahitya Samskriti Mandal, 1978), part 1, p. 137.

37 *Ibid.*, part 2, p. 424.

38 O. P. Verma, *The Yadavas and their times* (Nagpur, Vidarbha Samshodhan Mandal, 1970), pp. 229, 253, 300.

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the period when the Chalukyas and then the Rashtrakutas reigned over the area of what is today's Maharashtra. It is said that the mother tongue of the Rashtrakuta kings was Kannada. It has also been argued that Maharashtra was a Kannada-speaking region in the olden times and Marathi developed as a separate language due to the northern influence. The Yadavas of Devagiri supported Marathi whereas the Yadavas of Hoysala retained their Kannada identity.[39] It is, therefore, reasonable to assume that the change from Gorava to Gurav took place during this period as the two languages took different paths.

The modern divisions between the states of Karnataka and Maharashtra are not a useful guide to understanding the evolution of the Gurav priestly caste. My research into the origin of the Gurav priestly caste began in Maharashtra but inevitably led to Karnataka where I discovered the Gorava priestly caste. The evidence suggests that not only are the Guravas and Goravas identical but that it is a fair assumption that the Marathi Gurav caste derives from the Kannada Goravas. Having established the social identity of the Gurav, the next section considers their relationship to the brahmin.

The Gurav's claim to Brahminhood and counter claims

Because of the hierarchical nature of the caste system and the status enjoyed by the higher castes, lower castes have periodically striven to elevate themselves to a higher status by a variety of means. Traditionally, the kings could grant or confirm caste status because of the power they wielded. For example, during their time in Maharashtra, the Rashtrakuta royalty formed themselves into a sub-caste of kshatriyas called 'satkshatriyas' and claimed even higher status than brahmins.[40] The Marathi brahmins sought to undermine such claims by declaring that in the Kaliyuga (the era of decline and catastrophe in classical Hindu thought), the kshatriyas and vaishyas became extinct and only two *varnas* survived: the brahmin and the shudra.[41] Thus, the brahmin's view of fourteenth century Maharashtra was that there were only two *varnas*. To keep their explanations neat, a third group, the untouchables, were added later as a sub-rank to the shudra *varna*.[42]

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39 M. M. Deshpande, *Sociolinguistic Attitudes in India* (Ann Arbor, Karoma Publishers Inc., 1979), p. 102. See also K. P. Kulkarni, *Marathi Bhasha, Udgama Va Vikas* (Pune, Modern Book Depot Prakashan, 1963), p. 227. Kulkarni states that the Dravidian languages, Kannada and Telugu, have strongly influenced the Marathi language. These two languages pre-date Marathi and they were spoken in the area of what is Maharashtra today before the birth of Marathi.

40 G. Yazdani, *The Early History of the Deccan*, Vols. 1 and 2 (Delhi, Oriental Book Reprint Corporation, O.U.P., 1982), Vol. 1, p. 309.

41 Israel and Wagel, *op. cit.*, p. 145.

42 There are instances of exceptions to this rule as well. The Satvahanas were born out of a hypogamous (Pratiloma) marriage ;and hence were shudras. They however became mighty kings and performed many sacrifices (Yagnas) which were prohibited for shudras. In another instance, Gagabhatta, the great brahmin pandit from Banares, performed the Upanayana

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Up to the early nineteenth century, there was conflict between the brahmins and non-brahmins over the right to recite and hear the Vedas and practice rituals sanctioned by them (Vedokta). For the performance of religious ceremonies, two types of rituals have evolved; the Vedic and the Puranic. The brahmins have always insisted that the Vedic *mantras* are of great sanctity and that they are therefore the only ones who should recite them. The Puranic ones are not based on revealed knowledge (*shruti*) and hence they are of less sanctity and could be used by and for non-brahmins. This gave rise to bitter conflicts between the Marathi brahmins and Chandraseniya Kayastha Prabhu (C.K.P.s), a caste which had long claimed to be kshatriyas, at Pune in 1789 and at Baroda and Satara in 1825. The disputes eventually went to court and were resolved in favour of the C.K.P.s.[43] The C.K.P.s were given kshatriya status by the courts.

The brahmins in Maharashtra sought to maintain their position by declaring all non-brahmins to be shudras. With a few notable exceptions, such as the C.K.P.s, Marathi brahmins appear to have succeeded in convincing other *varnas* and castes that all non-brahmins are shudras. One of the most effective means the brahmins employed to do this was the creation of new shudra castes through the employment of the 'Varnasankara' theory developed by Manu and other Gruhyasutra writers. The division of people into four *varnas* was mainly notional and not strictly adhered to even at the time of the *Manusmiti*. Hypergamy, which was grudgingly accepted, and hypogamy, which was frowned upon, both took place. *Varna* structure had, therefore, to be modified by the introduction of *jatis* and *upajatis* (castes and sub-castes) in order to accommodate thousands of permutations and combinations that had to be assimilated. To maintain their exclusivity, the brahmins encouraged the elaboration of the shudra *varna*. It is of interest to study such literature in connection with the origin of the Gurav. The typical brahmanical explanation links the Gurav to illicit sexual unions between fallen priests and shudra prostitutes or between brahmins and impure women (women who are menstruating or have given birth). In his *History of Dharmashastra* Kane refers to two mediaeval works that mention new castes: *Shudrakamalakara* and *Jativiveka*.[44] The *Shudrakamalakara*[45] states that

> A Shiva-worshipper of the Pashupata sect is called a Jangam. If a son is born to a Shudra prostitute from a fallen Jangam, he is to be known as 'Bhasmankura'. His lot in life is to worship Shiva constantly. He should perform the 'Puja' of Shiva and

(sacred thread) ceremony for King Shivaji, thus raising him to kshatriya status. He then crowned him King in 1674.

43 Israel and Wagle, *op. cit.*

44 P. V. Kane, *History of the Dharmashastra* (Pune, Govt. Oriental Series, Class B, no. 6, Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute, 1973), Vol. II, pt. 1, p. 102.

45 The *Shudrakamalakara* also known as *Shudradharmatatwaprakasha* was written by Kamalakapandit in the late sixteenth century at Banares. An edition with a Marathi translation and extensive commentary was published in Bombay in 1910.

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> dispose of the 'Nirmalya'. He should live on offerings made to Shiva by other devotees. He should grow his hair long, cover himself with Bhasma (ash) and worship the Shivalinga. The betel leaves, rice, money, cows, farms etc that have been offered to Shiva by other devotees rightfully belong to the Bhasmankura.

The translator, Vamanshastri Islampurkar comments[46]

> (These Bhasmankuras) must be the ones that are the Gurav today. In all of the old Shiva temples throughout India, the traditional Pujaris are the Gurav. Of these, many are Lingayats. On the other hand, there are those who wear the sacred thread, shave the heads of widows, i.e. behave like Brahmins. Those Gurav who behave like Brahmins are probably Kund or Golaks.[47] Those Gurav who behave like Shudras are probably Bhasmankuras.

The second text, the *Jativiveka*, was written by a brahmin called Gopinath Pandit, in Pune in 1851,[48] and an index was prepared for it by Trymbak Pandit probably around the same time. While the index for *Jativiveka* gives the same story about the origin of the Gurav as the *Shudrakamalakara*, the text of the *Jativiveka* has another interesting story to tell. An alternative origin for the Gurav, according to the *Jativiveka* is as follows:

> On the first day of her period a woman is called a Chandali. If as a result of the union of a woman in such a state with a Brahmin, a son is born, he is called a Devalaka. He should always play instruments such as the Mrudanga. He should wear white clothes, have three horizontal lines of sandal-paste on his forehead and he should wear a necklace made from the Rudraksha beads. The Devalaka should always be at the Shiva temple. Such is the origin of the Devalaka-Gurav.

One can clearly see that while grudgingly accepting the Gurav's right to the worship of Shiva and to the offerings made to Shiva by devotees - the brahmins are forbidden to partake of these — brahmin authors have made a

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46 V. Islampurkar (trans.), *Shri Shudrakamalakara or Shudradharmatatwaprakasha* (3rd ed., Bombay, Tukaram Javji, 1910).

47 The son of a brahmin man and a brahmin woman through adultery is called a Kund; a Golak is the son of a brahmin man and a brahmin widow out of wedlock.

48 Gopinath pandit, 'Jativivek' (handwritten manuscript at Vishwakosha Karyalaya, Wai, Maharashtra State, 1851). The *Jativiveka* also states that the origins of the Kayastha and the Shaiva-sonar (goldsmith) *jatis* are through intercourse by a brahmin with a woman on the second and third days of her menstrual period respectively. Hindu Shastras regard women as impure during their menstruation and forbid intercourse at this time. The birth of a lower caste from a woman in impure state would be a very logical outcome from the point of view of the brahmin author of the *Jativiveka*.

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somewhat desperate attempt to down grade both *jangams* and the Gurav.[49] This grudging acceptance of the Gurav's right to Shiva's puja and material offerings to Shiva seems to prove unwittingly the Gurav's case for their brahmanical origin.

The Devalaka brahmin: conflict within the brahmin community

It has been mentioned earlier that the Shaiva-Gurav call themselves Devalakas (fallen brahmins). We have also seen that the Marathi brahmin, Gopinath Pandit, also saw it fit to call them Devalakas. Devalaka is a word which has been used since ancient times for an inferior brahmin who performed temple worship for remuneration. P. V. Kane, in his *History of Dharmashastra* writes:

> It must be remembered that all Brahmanas were not priests. Similarly, all priests in all Indian temples and shrines are not Brahmanas. Temple priests are comparatively a later institution and in olden times they were looked down upon and are regarded as inferior Brahmanas even in modern times. Manu (III, 152) states that a Devalaka (a Brahmana who performed for remuneration service before the image in a temple) was unfit to be invited to a Shraddha or to officiate in sacrifices to gods if he continuously served for three years in this capacity. The ideal set before Brahmanas from very ancient times was of poverty, of plain living and high thinking, of abandoning the active pursuit of riches, of devotion to the study of Vedas and Shastras, of cherishing high culture and of handing down literature and cultural outlook.[50]

In a paper entitled 'Orthodox Attitudes Towards Temple Service and Image Worship in Ancient India', Von Stietencron[51] has discussed a possible schism within the brahmin clan that took place during the change from Vedic religion to temple worship. During this period, the vedic gods Indra, Varuna and Agni slowly lost their importance. On the other hand, the worship of the images of Shiva, Keshava (Vishnu) and Rama gained popularity. Stietencron suggests that it was the loss of clientele that forced a division among brahmins. Some acknowledged the temple cults and the new gods of the non-Aryans and tried to integrate them into brahminic religion. The more

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49 The term jangam (jangama) was applied originally to the Kalamukha Acharyas, who were, as seen earlier, the spiritual leaders of the Kamataka kings. The Lingayat sect adopted this term to describe their own spiritual leaders and priests. The term is still used in this way.

50 Kane, *op. cit.*, Vol. V, pt. 2, p. 906.

51 H. von Stietencron, 'Orthodox Attitudes towards Temple Service and Image Worship in Ancient India', *Central Asiatic Journal*, Vol. XXI (1977), p. 126. Temple priests, which include the Devalakas and Vaikhanas, have also been discussed by Colas at a recent conference. G. Colas, 'The Temple Priest. A Devalaka?', *Proceedings of the XXXII International Congress for Asian and North African Studies* (25-30 August 1986). Only a brief conference abstract was available at the time of writing this paper, hence a detailed analysis could not be made.

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orthodox ones, however, resisted this change and applied to these former brahmins the term 'Devalaka' which had been used earlier to describe the shudra custodians of images. By this means, they indicated that in the eyes of the orthodox these Devalaka priests had fallen (Patitah) from the rank of brahmin to low caste shudra. They were thus unfit to eat in the company of honourable brahmins. In support of his claim, Stietencron quotes the *Mahabharata*, the *Smritis* and the *Puranas*.

Stietencron's hypothesis concerning the division among brahmins and the use of the term Devalaka is accompanied by another hypothesis about how shudras could still worship the brahmin gods. Thus, he writes:

> Part of them (the Brahmins) thought it wise to acknowledge temple cults along with the major new gods and tried to integrate them into the Brahminic religious system.

This required the brahmins to take over important functions in the temple service; it also implied the recognition of the fact that all castes from brahmins to shudras could worship the same god. Stietencron adds:

> (The more orthodox) Brahmans were strictly against these concessions. They continued to consider temple service and image worship as inferior religious activities adequate only for Shudras and for low people bereft of proper knowledge. To them, the religious barriers which separated the three upper castes from the Shudras seemed absolutely indispensable. Full of contempt, they applied to them the same word 'Devalaka' which had been used for Shudra custodians of images before.

Stietencron's interpretation could go a long way towards explaining the paradox of Gurav temple worship in Maharashtra. But without conclusive historical evidence, it is impossible to know whether the Gurav are the fallen Devalaka brahmins of the distant past as claimed by them. These claims were made through the compilation of three *Jatipuranas* or caste history books by the Gurav at the turn of the twentieth century.

The *Devalaka-Kathamrits*[52] was published in 1905 and was written in the Marathi language. The *Sthula-Shaivagama*,[53] which followed in 1909 was written in the Sanskrit language. Two years later, the *Laghu-Shaivagama*,[54] also in Marathi, appeared. Recently, a Gurav from Madhya Pradesh by the name of Omdatta Arya, has produced a booklet called *Gaurav* in Hindi[55] in which he has explored the *Shivapurana* story about the origin of the Devalaka brahmin in some detail.

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52 Balshastri Upasani, *Devalaka-Kathamrit*, (ed.) N. M. Gurav (Bombay, Jagadtechhu Press, 1905).

53 Jehurkar, Kashinathswami, Bhagwantswami, *Sthula-Shaivagama* (Solapur, Shri Dattaprasad Press, 1909).

54 S. D. Pande, *Laghushaivagama*, (Nagpur, Motivilas Press, 1907).

55 O. Arya, *Gaurav* (Ujjain, Kirti Printing Press, 1981).

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All of the *Jatipuranas* mentioned above contain a structural element common to many other caste histories. In the true Puranic style, they describe (1) how their distant forebears committed a sin; (2) how this incurred the wrath of God; (3) the resulting curse which downgraded them to shudra status; (4) the expiation of the sin, and finally, (5) their social rehabilitation at a level lower than what they had before but higher than their present shudra status. In the modern period, this structural device enabled many a caste to lay claim to high status.

The above *Jatipuranas* narrate the same story about the mythical origin of the Shaiva-Gurav. This story is analysed by me elsewhere[56] and hence only a cursory treatment of it will be given here. The story is narrated in the forty-fourth chapter of the *Jnansamhita* of the *Shivapurana*.[57] and describes the origin of the Devalaka brahmin. The Devalaka is the son of Sudarshana and the grandson of the sage Dadhichi. Shiva curses Sudarshana for touching the Shivalinga on the auspicious Shivaratri day in an impure state brought about after engaging in sexual intercourse with his wife and not purifying himself by bathing. The version given by the *Shivapurana* and the three *Jatipuranas* differs from the version quoted by Enthoven (1920) and by Russell and Hira Lal (1975 reprint).

In the *Shivapurana* and the two *Jatipuranas*, Sudarshana and Dadhichi practice penance after the curse. The god, pleased with the penance, gives Sudarshana the sacred Shiva-gayatri *mantra* and the right to worship Shiva before everyone else and on every occasion. He also allows him to accept for his own use the offerings made by the other devotees to Shiva (Nirmalya). The god goes so far as to declare that unless a Devalaka is worshipped first, the god's *puja* will not be complete. On the other hand, in the accounts by Enthoven, Russell and Hira Lal, the infuriated god cursed Sudarshana to be a shudra but he softened later on to give him the first right to *puja* in spite of his shudra status. Since the Gurav claim to be Devalakas, they naturally say that the versions given by Enthoven and others have been deliberately changed in order to malign the Gurav. As seen earlier, the informants of Enthoven and of Russell and Hira Lal would have been brahmins and it would be hardly surprising if their accounts described the Gurav as a shudra. The brahmin accounts are, however, unable to explain the dichotomy between the Gurav's shudra status on one hand and his right to Shiva's *puja* before the brahmin on

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56 J. P. Bapat, 'The Gurav Jatipuranas', paper given at the A.S.A.A. Conference, Armidale, NSW, Australia (July 1992).

57 *The Shivamahapurana* (Bombay, Khemraj Shrikrishnadas, Shri Venkateshwar Steam Press, 1896). The *Jnansamhita* is found only in the 1896 edition of this *purana*. The editions after this, including the current one, do not contain this *samhita*. The story of Devalaka appears in the 44th chapter of this *samhita*. For a detailed discussion of the *Shivamahapurana* and its *samhitas*, see R. C. Hazra, 'The Problems Relating to the Shiva-Purana', *Our Heritage*, Vol. 1 (1953), p. 46. See also L. Rocher, *The Puranas* (Wiesbaden, Otto Harrasowitz, 1986), p. 223; Pandit J. Mishra, *Ashtadashapuranadarpan* (Bombay, Khemraj Shrikrishnadas, Shri Venkateshwara Steam Press, 1939).

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the other hand. The only way to reconcile these apparent contradictions is to recognise the brahminal origin or the Gurav.

The ritual ancestry of the Gurav and the claims before the Shankaracharya

The 'Shastric' way to determine the ritual ancestry of the Gurav, as brahmins or whatever, is by defining what it is that qualifies a person to be called a brahmin and then to see if the Gurav meet these criteria. Life cycle rituals require all brahmins to be able to recite their Gotra Pravara, Shakha and *Sutra*.[58] Since early times, the ability to do this has been taken as the proof of the brahminic origin of a person.

All brahmins claim to be descendants of eight Vedic seers: Vishwamitra, Jamadagni, Bharadwaja, Gautama, Atri, Vasishtha, Kashyapa and Agasthya.[59] These eight mythical ancestors are called 'Originators of Gotras' (clans) and the brahmins identify themselves as the progeny of one of these eight seers. Hence all brahmins belong to one of the eight Gotras. Pravaras are also ancestors, most probably the illustrious members of a Gotra. Thus one Gotra can have several Pravaras. Next in importance to the Gotras, Pravaras entered into domestic ceremonies and other ritual practices of the Vedic brahmins as a diacritical mark of a group (and of the individual members belonging to it).

During Vedic times a brahmin following the tradition of his own household, studied one of the four Vedas and identified with it in terms of the chants and *mantras* he would use for the ritual performances. He acquired his Vedic identity through the particular recession of the Veda he was required to follow. These family practices came to be identified as *shakhas* (branch of a tree). Finally, the *sutras* are ritual manuals prepared by the *rishi* (seer). The *sutra* of a brahmin family is named after the *rishi* whose manual of rituals is utilised by it in religious ceremonies.

Brahmin castes in Maharashtra are also classified according to the region of Maharashtra they inhabit. Thus the Konkanstha are those from the coastal areas; Deshastha are from hinterland, and Karade are those from the town of Karad and its surrounding region. Until recently, these groups were endogamous. Currently in Maharashtra, while every brahmin must in principle know his Gotra, Pravara and Veda identity, and does so in practice, only those who still act as priests know their *sutra* and *shakha*. Personal knowledge of one's Gotra, Pravara and Veda identity is still taken as the definitive proof of a person's brahminhood. Other *varnas* in Maharashtra do not possess a Gotra identity any more. In the performances of religious ceremonies for these groups, whenever the utterance of Gotra and Pravara

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58 J. N. Bhattacharya, *Hindu Castes and Sects* (rep. Calcutta, Editions Indian, 1968), p. 22.

59 Kane, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, pt. 1, p. 480. Kane suggests that Gotras were acquired both by descent and by attachment.

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identity is essential, the performing brahmin uses his own Gotra and Pravara.[60]

If the claims of the Shaiva-Gurav to be brahmin temple priests are to be accepted, they would therefore be expected to know their Gotra, Pravara and Shakha identity if indeed they are brahmin temple priests. There is evidence to suggest that this certainly was the case when they met with the Shankaracharya of Shringeri Math.[61] The meeting took place at Wai in Maharashtra in 1811 A.D. and the Gurav, as proof of their brahminhood, have published a detailed account of this meeting.[62] Apparently, the Gurav were able to answer satisfactorily twenty-nine questions that the arbiter, spiritual leader, asked them. These involved information about the Gurav's Gotra, Pravara and Shakha identity. In answer to the Shankaracharya's questions, the Gurav claimed that they were brahmins and hence entitled to Vedokta (and not Puranokta) rituals and that they were Pashupatas and belonged to the Nath sect.[63] The Shankaracharya then declared the Gurav to be Shaiva brahmins and added that in his native state, Karnataka, similar Shaiva priests were called 'Gurukkul brahmins'.[64]

The Shaiva-Gurav's real caste identity: some final thoughts

Are the Shaiva-Gurav brahmin, vaishyas or shudras? Apart from one reference,[65] I have not found any other mention of them being called vaishyas. Their inclusion among vaishyas, during the reign of Yadavas, if true, may have been due to their involvement in the business of selling flowers and leaf plates. There is no other vaishya function that they seem to have performed.

On the other hand, Marathi brahmins have always classed the Gurav as shudras. The *Leelacharitra*[66] (1283 A.D.) mentions a brahmin lady, Rupabai,

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60 *Loc. cit.*

61 The Shankaracharya of Shringeri, who lived somewhere around the 6th or 7th century A.D., was responsible for the re-establishment of Shaivism in India. He established four centres (mathas) in the four corners of India, to revive Hinduism, in particular, Shaivism. This tradition is still current and the spiritual leaders who occupy these seats are known as Shankaracharyas and are highly respected even in contemporary India. The seal of approval from the Shankaracharya is thus tantamount to universal acceptance within Hindu India.

62 K. B. Upadhye, *Mahiti-Patrak* (Solapur, January 1913). This information has been reproduced at various times by Shaiva-brahmin *jati* newspapers and magazines. See B. M. Jintikar (ed.), *Shaiva-Samachara* (15 April 1973).

63 The Gurav went to the Shankaracharya in an attempt to challenge the 'shudra' label given to them by the Marathi brahmins. Thus, as early as 1811, there existed a dispute between the Shaiva brahmins and Marathi brahmins, long before the disputes precipitated by the British census of 1911.

64 The Gurukkul is a caste of Shiva temple priest in Karnataka state. They are considered as brahmins, albeit, low ones.

65 Verma, *op. cit.*

66 Kolate, *op. cit.*, (no. 424), p. 604.

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who is asked to have a bath and thus purify herself for the sin of accepting a drink of water from a Gurav. Much later, during the reign of the Peshwas in the seventeenth century, there is mention of a brahmin being fined for attempting to teach Rudra chants to a *jangam* (spiritual leader of the Lingayat Gurav). The *jangam*, in this instance, faced the death penalty. Instead, all of his belongings including his house were confiscated and the *jangam* was driven out from the city. Another *jangam*, who was caught chanting the Rudra, was jailed.[67] What then does a caste of temple priests labelled as shudras do, to maintain their importance in the social hierarchy? It has only two alternatives: either accept the shudra label and then explain why it is that even as shudras they are allowed the special privilege of acting as temple priests in Marathi temples (this was done successfully in the non-brahmin Mathas in south India such as Dharmapuram),[68] or they can claim that their fallen caste status is due to a folly of one of their ancestors or that it is as a result of a deliberate attempt by vengeful brahmins to bring them down. The Gurav have resorted to the last alternative. They have always claimed noble ancestry from the sage Dadhichi. Also, they have blamed the brahmins for not accepting them into the brahmin *varna*. Scarcity of available material and an almost complete lack of an oral tradition on the part of the Gurav makes a definitive conclusion concerning the validity of these claims almost impossible. However, a lot of evidence, quite often in the form of seemingly unrelated morsels of information, points to the fact that the Shaiva-Gurav may in fact be fallen brahmins. The evidence can be summarised as follows:

1. The Gurav have successfully challenged their classification as shudras in civil law suits. During one such suit in 1938, the Gurav were able to get Nyayaratna Vinod, a respected Marathi brahmin pandit and scholar, to give evidence on their behalf that the Shaiva-Gurav were, in fact, brahmins. The magistrate accepted this argument and ruled in the favour of the Shaiva-Gurav.[69]

   Similarly in 1911, the official census at Bale in Sholapur district refused to accept the Shaiva-Gurav as brahmins. The matter went before the collector of the time who ruled that, 'If they so wished, the Gurav could write their caste as"Shaiva-Brahmins"'.

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67 G. S. Sardesai, *The Social and Religious Matters under the Peshwas (1717-1729)*, Vol. 43, 'Selections from the Peshwa Daftar (Bombay Govt. Central Press, 1934), pp. 92, 94.

68 K. I. Koppedrayer, 'Are Shudras entitled to ride in the palanquin?', *Contributions to Indian Society*, N.S. 25, 2 (1991), p. 154.

69 M. Vinod, *Aho saubhagyam* (Pune, Siddhashrama Prakashan, 1984), p. 154. This autobiography of Maitreyi Vinod mentions that her husband, Nyayaratna Vinod, a well-known brahmin scholar, gave evidence on behalf of the Gurav in a law suit at Satara in 1938. The magistrate accepted his argument that the Shaiva-Gurav were brahmins.

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2. Apart from the brahmins, other Marathi castes including the kshatriyas seem to accept the Gurav's authority as temple priests. The Gurav are also family priests to many castes.

3. There is very good evidence to suggest that not long ago at least some of the Gurav were well read in the Shastras and had a good knowledge of the Sanskrit language.[70] Most Shaiva-Gurav have a Gotra identity and many know their Veda, Pravara and Shakha.

4. As has already been mentioned, the Gurav have a threading ceremony, brahminic rituals like Garbhadana (the conception ritual) and marriage rituals very similar to Deshastha or Dravid brahmins.[71] They are also strict vegetarians.

5. The Shaiva brahmins will accept food only from brahmins and Enthoven states that the brahmins 'smoke with the Gurav'.

6. In some of the most important shrines such as Vithala shrine at Pandharpur, the Ambabai shrine at Kolhapur, and all the major Shiva temples, the worship by the Gurav is an old practice. At Kolhapur, the brahmins actually share the worship with the Gurav on a rotational basis.

7. The brahmins in Maharashtra have accepted the right of the Gurav to perform the first *puja* in the morning and the last *puja* at night in all the Shiva shrines. Unless the Gurav has performed his first *puja* in the morning, the brahmin will not perform his Abhisheka (bathing the Shivalinga with sacred water while chanting the Rudra). Also, once the Gurav has performed his last *puja* at night, the brahmin will never enter the inner *sanctum sanctorum* of the temple.

8. Most importantly, the brahmins have accepted the Gurav's right to the Nirmalya, the offering to Shiva made by devotees. The brahmins thus will not touch the money, food and other items offered by the devotees.

Modern day Marathi brahmins argue that Shiva is a non-Aryan deity and hence they cannot accept gifts made to him. According to them, the Gurav who are shudras can

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70 A Gurav called Shende recently wrote to me that his grandfather used to perform both the Shivasandhya and the Vishnosandhya daily. He also had Agnihotra, the constant burning of ritual sacrificial fire.

71 Kelkar, *op. cit.*

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accept the Nirmalaya.[72] This argument, however, seems exaggerated because there are important Shiva shrines in Maharashtra (for example the temple of Trymbakeshwar, one of the famous Jyotirlingas in India) where brahmins do act as priests. Futhermore in other Shiva shrines once the Gurav has done his *puja*, the brahmin often performs 'Rudra-Abhisheka' which involves bathing the idol while chanting *mantras* from 'Shatarudriya', a prayer for rudra from the yajurveda.[73]

9. Seetharamaiah[74] states that in Karnataka, the Goravas were Kalamukha priests who were held in high esteem in the courts of the Kannada Kings in the ninth and tenth centuries. Lorenzen[75] says that the Kalamukha Acharyas were highly learned people and their Mathas were centres of traditional Sanskrit learning. Their influence waned after the fourteenth century with the increased influence of Veera-Shaivism. While Seetharamaiah suggests that the Goravas have no connection with the Gurav, he offers no proof for his assertion. If then, the Gurav are in fact Goravas of the distant past, they may have been connected with the Kalamukha strongholds in Maharashtra such as Ardhapura, Nanded and Ganeshwadi. The Kalamukha influence in Maharashtra waned after the emergence of the Nath sect.[76] It will be remembered that the Gurav call themselves Nath-Panthi (belonging to the Nath sect) and it is reasonable to suggest that the Gurav switched their loyalties from the Kalamukha cult to the Nath cult.

10. In an interesting article which examines South Indian Shaivism, Brunner[77] has examined several *Shaiva-agamas*, the ritual texts of southern Shaivism, many of which predate the Aryan religion. Some of these texts differentiate between a Vipra — a Vedic brahmin and a Shaiva-brahmin. Brunner suggests that the Varna and Gotra system, which was absent in the Shaiva religion, may have been adopted by them after being absorbed into

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72 Personal communication: interviews with many brahmin priests.

73 On their part, the Gurav maintain that unless one is initiated in the traditional Shaivite rituals, one is not allowed to take the Nirmalya of Shiva. H. Brunner, 'De la Consommation du Nirmalya de Shiva', *Journal Asiatique* (1969). It is therefore the traditional Shaiva priests who have the right to do so.

74 S. Seetharamaiah, 'Goravas of Karnataka', in *Shrikanthika*, [Dr S. Shrikantha Shastri Felicitation volume] (Mysore, Geetha Book House, 1973), p. 316.

75 Lorenzen, *op. cit.*, p. 115.

76 For a discussion of the Nath and Kalmukha sects in Maharashtra, see K. D. Bhingarker, 'Nath Pantha and Shive', in Prasad, *Sharadarout*, Special Issue, Vol. 1, 24 (Aug. 1970), p. 31; M. R. Joshi, 'Maharastratael Shaiva-sampradaya va Nathpanthacha Vistara', *ibid.*, p. 25.

77 Brunner, *op. cit.*,

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> the Aryan religion. The Shaiva priests would have then taken the name, 'Shaiva-brahmins'. While it is an extremely interesting theory, lack of evidence of any sort makes it impossible to connect the Gurav-priests to Vedic Shaiva brahmins. However, whatever their origin in the distant past, the history of the past seven hundred odd years points to their being fallen brahmins.

Tenuous as the above may seem, due to the lack of substantive evidence, these facts do support the hypothesis that the non-brahmin Gurav temple priests of western India are fallen brahmins. It is interesting to note that the Gurav-equivalents in the neighbouring states of Karnataka and Gujarat, the Gurukkul[78] and Tapodhans[79], are actually classed as brahmins by those societies, albeit, lower in status than all other brahmins. The Gurav say that some of their kind migrated to Gujarat and were named Tapodhan in that state.[80]

If the claims of the Shaiva Gurav are true, then the phenomenon of low caste priests serving in the temples of Maharashtra is not a sign of cultural tolerance but rather an indication of how inflexible the Marathi brahmins were — for when the Gorava of Karnataka migrated into northern Maharashtra, they lost the undisputed brahminical status which they had in Karnataka. They never regained that status but were grudgingly given some stake in the temple rituals — presumably in the interest of social cohesion.

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78 Thurston and Rangachari, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 309.

79 G. H. Desai, *Bharuch Shaharno Itihas* (Bharuch, Gnanodaya Printing Press, 1914), p. 127. See also S. Rajgor, *Gujaratna Brahmanono Itihasa* (Ahmedabad, Rajgor, B. S., 1987), p. 351; and Girijashankar Nirbhayaram (Bhatta), *Tadpodhan Tatwaprakasha* (Ahmedabad, Jnanodaya Electric Printing Press, 1932).

80 Chhote Lall Sharma-Gaud, *Saptakhandi Jati Nirnaya* (Fulera (Jaipur), Hindu Dharma Varna Wyawastha Mandab, 1924), p. 323.

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Saptakhandi Jati Nirnay Volume 2 - 323 page number 1923 Affiliation of Kashi Pandits and other hindi dharma adhikari

उपेति ब्राह्मणों की उच्चता व प्रभावोत्पदर्शक प्राचीन पत्रादि की कुछ नकलें व बादशाही समय के फरमानों की प्रतिलिपियें आदि आदि हमारे पास आयी थीं परन्तु उनकी भाषा कुछ दक्षिणी कुछ पहाड़ी व कुछ उर्दू फारसी आदि आदि विचित्र रूप में होने से उनकी नकलें देना हमने उचित नहीं समझा क्योंकि उन्हें हम समझ नहीं सके।

गुरव:- यह दक्षिण देश व मध्यमदेश की एक ब्राह्मण जाति है, प्राचीन कालमें ब्राह्मण विद्या सम्पन्न विवेकी होते थे, ये ही भगवान् की सेवा पूजा व अर्चन वन्दना में विशेष रूप से नियत किये जाते थे, उस समय के भगवद्भक्त सेवक लोग भी अपने अपने इष्ट देवों के मंदिरों की सेवा पूजा और वन्दना के लिये योग्य योग्य व्यक्तियों को नियत करने में अपना गौरव समझते थे। इस ही कारण उस समय के लोग उन पुजारियों को "गौरवी" कहते थे। जिसका भावार्थ ऐसा होता है कि जनता से जो गौरव प्राप्त ब्राह्मण हैं वे गौरवी व गुरवी व गुरव कहाये। गौरवी शुद्ध शब्द से गौरव बना है और गौरव से गुरव आज कल का नाम प्रसिद्ध है।

जब विद्वानों का विशेष पूजन सत्कार इस देश में था उस समय पूज्य स्थानों में व देवालयों में भेंट पूजा व ठाकुर के भोग के लिये भी बड़ी बड़ी दान दक्षिणायें व पुजापा चढ़ता रहता था जिसके मालिक पुजारी महन्त व गुरव लोग ही हुआ करते थे इस ही कारण गुरव लोगों को पूर्ण गौरव प्राप्त हुआ था अतः जो लोग पूर्ण गौरव युक्त थे वे ही गौरवी, गुरवी व गुरव से प्रसिद्ध हुए। अन्य विद्वानों का मत भी हमें अपने जाति अन्वेषण की यात्रा में ऐसा ही प्राप्त हुआ है। इन ही जातियों के अन्वेषण के सम्बन्ध में काशी तक की यात्रा करनी पड़ी। वहां के कतिपय नामाङ्कित नामाङ्कित विद्वानों से इस ही गुरव जाति के सम्बन्ध में हमने परामर्श किया था उस ही के फलस्वरूप में हमने उपरोक्त सम्मति लिखी है।

सरकारी अफ़सरों ने भी अपने अपने ग्रन्थों में किसी किसी जाति के सम्बन्ध में कुछ लिखा है वह उन का सिद्धान्त कहीं पर

गुरव ब्राह्मणों के ऐश्वर्य्य को न सहन सकने वाले समुदाय ने इन के विरुद्ध कुछ कल्पित गाथाय रच डालीं वे अमाननीय हैं लिखा है:—

तेतु वैश्याः समं दारैर्यथाभाग ययुर्द्विजान्।
येषां गृहे यः गुरवः तद्वृत्तं गोत्र माप्नुयुः ॥५५॥
सर्वे ते च सपत्नीका द्विजानां प्रीति कारिणः।
ते द्विजाः स्वगृहाञ्जग्मुः स्तुवंतः परमेश्वरीम् ॥५६

भा० उ० पृ० २०१ श्लो० ५५-५६

भा०-जो जो वैश्य सपत्नीक ब्राह्मणों के विभाग में रहे और जिनके घर पर गुरव लोग रहे उन वैश्यों का गोत्र भी उन गुरव ब्राह्मणों के समान हुआ ॥५५॥ फिर वे सपत्नीक वैश्य लोग तथा गुरव लोग महालक्ष्मी की स्तुति करते हुए अपने अपने घर को गए ॥ ५६ ॥

इस पुराणोक्त कथा के अधारानुसार गुरव जाति ब्राह्मण सिद्ध होती है।

पण्डित घ० काव्यतीर्थ ने हमें ऐसी सम्मति दी कि जो ब्राह्मण समुदाय अपनी योग्यता के कारण गुरुदीक्षा दिया करते थे वे गुरु कहाते थे इस ही गुरु शब्द का समुदायवाचक 'गुरवः' होने से यह जाति प्रसिद्ध हुई ऐसा होना भी सम्भव है—जो चढ़ता है सो गिरता भी है जो उन्नति के शिखिर तक पहुंचता है वह अवनति के गड्ढे में पहुंच जाता है इस संसारचक्र की दशा के अनुसार किसी काल में गुरव ब्राह्मण जाति जितनी उच्च थी उतनी ही आज अधःपतन को प्राप्त हो कर नीच मानी जाने लगी है। परन्तु आजकल जाति निर्णय विधान गुण कर्म पर नहीं चलता है परन्तु सब कुछ उत्पत्त्यादि क्रम के आधारानुसार उच्चता व नीचता पर निर्भर है अतएव इस कलिकाल की १९०० की शताब्दि में दोषमुक्त कोई भी ब्राह्मण जाति व वर्ण नहीं है तब केवल गुरव जाति पर ही गुण कर्मों की कसौटी की व्यवस्था क्यों?

गुरव जाति को शैव, शुद्धशैव, शिव ब्राह्मण, पुजारी, देवल, देवलक आदि आदि नामों द्वारा भी लोग पुकारते हैं। प्राचीन

गुरव ब्राह्मणों के ऐश्वर्य्य को न सहन सकने वाले समुदाय ने इन के विरुद्ध कुछ कल्पित गाथाय रच डालीं वे अमाननीय हैं लिखा है:—

तेतु वैश्याः समं दारैर्यथाभाग ययुर्द्विजान्।
येषां गृहे यः गुरवः तद्वृत्तं गोत्र माप्नुयुः ॥५५॥
सर्वे ते च सपत्नीका द्विजानां प्रीति कारिणः।
ते द्विजाः स्वगृहान्जग्मुः स्तुवंतः परमेश्वरीम् ॥५६

ब्रा० उ० पृ० २०१ श्लो० ५५-५६

भा०-जो जो वैश्य सपत्नीक ब्राह्मणों के विभाग में रहे और जिनके घर पर गुरव लोग रहे उन वैश्यों का गोत्र भी उन गुरव ब्राह्मणों के समान हुआ ॥५५॥ फिर वे सपत्नीक वैश्य लोग तथा गुरव लोग महालक्ष्मी की स्तुति करते हुए अपने अपने घर को गए ॥ ५६ ॥

इस पुराणोक्त कथा के अधारानुसार गुरव जाति ब्राह्मण सिद्ध होती है।

पण्डित घ० काव्यतीर्थ ने हमें ऐसी सम्मति दी कि जो ब्राह्मण समुदाय अपनी योग्यता के कारण गुरुदीक्षा दिया करते थे वे गुरु कहाते थे इस ही गुरु शब्द का समुदायवाचक 'गुरवः' होने से यह जाति प्रसिद्ध हुई ऐसा होना भी सम्भव है—जो चढ़ता है सो गिरता भी है जो उन्नति के शिखिर तक पहुंचता है वह अवनति के गड्ढे में पहुंच जाता है इस संसारचक्र की दशा के अनुसार किसी काल में गुरव ब्राह्मण जाति जितनी उच्च थी उतनी ही आज अधःपतन को प्राप्त हो कर नीच मानी जाने लगी है। परन्तु आजकल जाति निर्णय विधान गुण कर्म पर नहीं चलता है परन्तु सब कुछ उत्पत्त्यादि क्रम के आधारानुसार उच्चता व नीचता पर निर्भर है अतएव इस कलिकाल की १९०० की शताब्दि में दोषमुक्त कोई भी ब्राह्मण जाति व वर्ण नहीं है तब केवल गुरव जाति पर ही गुण कर्मों की कसौटी की व्यवस्था क्यों?

गुरव जाति को शैव, शुद्धशैव, शिव ब्राह्मण, पुजारी, देवल, देवलक आदि आदि नामों द्वारा भी लोग पुकारते हैं। प्राचीन

स्मृतियों में व आधुनिक धर्म ग्रन्थों में परस्पर ब्रह्मद्वेष के कितने ही श्लोक मिलते हैं और कितने ही ऐसे विषय मिलते हैं कि जो प्रक्षिप्त हैं और आजकल वे प्रमाण अमान्य दृष्टि से देखे जाते हैं क्योंकि वे शास्त्र विरुद्ध हैं।

शिव पुराण में ऐसी कथा है कि गुरव ब्राह्मण दाधीच ऋषि की सन्तान हैं इन्हीं को शिव पूजा का अधिकार है ये लोग शिव पूजन बड़े प्रेम व अनन्य भाव से करते थे परन्तु किन्हीं आवश्यक कार्य्यवशात पूजा में विघ्न पड़ने से इन्हें श्राप हुआ तिस से ये लोग दरिद्री हो गये।

ऐसी लोग इनको ब्राह्मण ही मानने में सन्देह करते हैं परन्तु ऊपर की पुराणोक्त आख्यायिका से इन का ब्राह्मणत्व तो प्रकट है।

धर्म शास्त्रों में लिखा है:—

चिकित्सिकान् देवलकान् मांसविक्रयिणस्तथा।
विपणेनच जीवन्तो वर्ज्यास्युर्हव्य कव्ययोः॥

मनु० अ० ३ श्लो० १५२

अर्थः—वैद्य, पुजारी, मांस बिक्री करने वालों तथा व्यापार द्वारा जीविका करने वालों को हव्य कव्य में निषेध है। इस श्लोक से गुरव जाति का ब्राह्मणत्व सिद्ध होता है यदि ये उत्पत्यादि क्रम से ब्राह्मण न होते तो इन के लिये निषेध युक्त वाक्य भी न होता। परन्तु आजकल के समय में यह व्यवस्था शिलाधारी मात्र में प्रचलित नहीं है अर्थात् हव्य कव्यों में वैद्य, पुजारी और व्यापार द्वारा जीविका करने वाले ब्राह्मण गण विशेष मान्य पूर्वक बुलाये जाते हैं तब यह श्लोक केवल पुजारियों के लिये ही लागू क्यों मान लिया जाय? कदापि नहीं। इस श्लोक से पहिले के श्लोकों में इस ही तरह की कई एक आज्ञायें हैं पर वे कोई भी नहीं मानी जातीं तब केवल गुरव जाति को अब्राह्मण सिद्ध करने के उद्देश्य से ही यह श्लोक क्यों माना जाय? पुनः—

परिवित्तिस्तथास्तेवो दुष्कर्माः गुरुतल्पगाः।
कुशीलको देवलको नक्षत्रै यश्चजीवति॥

घारूरकर शास्त्री कृत धर्मशाः पृ० ३६६

भा०—उपरोक्त क्रमानुसार यहां भी पुजारी ब्राह्मण को हव्य कव्यादि में निमन्त्रण देने दिलाने का निषेध है। इससे भी गुरव जाति का पद ब्राह्मण वर्ष है।

पुनः और देखियेः—

असि जीवी मसीजीवी ग्रामलो देवयाजकः।
धावकः पाचकश्चैवः षडेते शूद्रवद्विजाः ॥१०२

आ० मा० तथा पा० धर्मशास्त्रे।

भा०—अस्त्र शस्त्रों को रख कर उनके द्वारा जीविका करने वाला, स्याही बेचने वाला, अष्टादश वर्णोपवर्णका आचार्य्यत्व करने वाला, द्रव्य लेके देव पूजा करने वाला, चिट्ठीरसा, रसोइये ये ६ प्रकार के ब्राह्मण ब्राह्मण होते हुए शूद्र नहीं किन्तु शूद्र के समान हैं इससे भी गुरव जाति ब्राह्मण सिद्ध होती है।

इस श्लोक का पाठ भेद ऐसा भी मिलता हैः—

असिजीवी मसीजीवी देवलो ग्रामयाजकः।
धावकः पाककर्त्ता च षडेते शूद्रबद्विजाः ॥

अर्थ तो उपरोक्त लेखानुसार ही है।

इस प्रकार के श्लोकादि प्रमाण हम अनेकों दे सकते हैं पर ग्रन्थ वृद्धिभयात् न देकर केवल इतना ही कहना पर्य्याप्त समझते हैं कि गुरव लोगों का वर्ण ब्राह्मण है और ये विद्या के अभाव व अपनी दीनावस्था के कारण छोटे समझे जाने लगे होंगे।

देवल शब्द और गुरव ये दोनों शब्द एक ही व एक ही अर्थ बोधक दो शब्द हैं उस ही की पुष्टि में ऐतिहासिक गोष्टी नामक पुस्तक के प्रथम भाग के पृष्ठ ३५ में "ब्राह्मणाचा धर्म" प्रकरण में लिखा है "देवाची वृत्ति घेउन घेऊन केली तरतो ब्राह्मण देवलक म्हणजे गुरव होतो" अर्थात् देवार्चन व पूजा वृत्ति दाम लेकर करे तो उसे देवलक यानी गुरव ब्राह्मण कहते हैं।

इससे गुरव ब्राह्मण तो ठहरते हैं पर विचारणीय यह है कि वेद पढ़ाने वाले, देवार्चन करने वाले व अन्य पूजा पाठ करने कराने

वाले सब ही ब्राह्मण वेतन लेकर सब ही काम करते हैं तब गुरव ब्राह्मणों पर ही आक्षेप क्यों ?

गवर्नमेन्ट हिन्द द्वारा मानी हुई हिन्दू ला नामक ग्रन्थ के पृष्ठ २०४ में लिखा है:—

Goorav:—Shiv Oopasak Brahman.

अर्थात् शिव उपासक ब्राह्मण को गुरव कहते हैं।

देवल शब्द जो गुरव शब्द का पर्य्यायवाची है उस का अर्थ करते हुए संस्कृत डिक्सनरी के पृष्ठ ५११ में ऐसा लिखा है:—

An attentdant upon an Idol, a low Brahman, who subsists upon the offerings made to an idol. A virtuous man.

भा०-देव मूर्ति की सेवा अर्चना करने वाला, एक नीच श्रेणी का ब्राह्मण जो देवता के चढ़ावे पर निर्वाह करते हैं।

(दूसरा अर्थ) एक सन्त पुरुष।

Directed to perform the Pooja of Shiv, to apply Bhusm (ashes of cowdung) and Roodraksh-urdhan to their bodies and to receive offerings of food grain etc. brought to the God Shiv by his worshippers.

At present this caste act as Poojaries receiving the offerings brought to temples of Shiv, Marootee or Hanuman, as food for the God. Such offerings are termed Nyvedy. The Poojaree or Urchak is not everywhere a Wuttandar or Goomashta. Hindu Law Page 204.

भावार्थ-इनको शिवकी पूजा करने का अधिकार है भस्म लगाने और रुद्राक्ष धारण कर सक्ते हैं और भक्तों द्वारा लाया हुआ चढ़ावा ले सक्ते हैं वर्तमान में यह गुरव जाति पूजा का कार्य्य करते हैं। और शिव तथा हनुमान का चढ़ावा लेते हैं इस चढ़ावे को प्रशाद व नैवेद्य कहते हैं पुजारी व अर्चक सर्वत्र तनख्वाहदार गुमाश्ते नहीं होते हैं। पुनः गुरव जाति के ब्राह्मणत्व विषय में प्रमाण मिलते हैं:—

धर्म सिन्धु के पृष्ठ ७०४ में जहां वर्ज्य ब्राह्मण गिनाये हैं वहां लिखा है कि "वैद्यो, राजभृत्यो, गायको, लेखकः, कुसीद जीवी, देवार्चनजीवी, आदि आदि" तथा वाणिज्योपजीवी गडुमान् ज्वरितो देवलको विधुरो आदि आदि ब्राह्मण हव्य कव्य में वर्ज्यनीय हैं। अर्थात् अन्य अन्य प्रकार के ब्राह्मणों में गुरुव ब्राह्मणों को भी वर्ज्यनीय लिखा है इस से गुरुव जाति का वर्ण ब्राह्मण ठहरता है। यदि धर्म सिन्धु के मतानुसार ब्राह्मण हव्य कव्य में लिये जांय तो १,४२,५४,९९१ भारतवर्षीय ब्राह्मणों में से कोई सौ पचास ही ब्राह्मण मिलेंगे।

जाति निर्णयकर्त्ता प्रसिद्ध विद्वान् पण्डित हरिकृ० जी ने अपने जाति निबन्ध ग्रन्थ के पृष्ठ १०८ में गुरव जाति के विषय में ऐसा लिखा है कि:—

सन्मार्गस्योपदेष्टारः स्वयं सन्मार्गशालिनः।
उन्मार्गं प्रति हर्तारो गुरवस्ते समीरिताः ॥७०॥

अर्थः—जो सन्मार्ग के उपदेश करने वाले तथा तदनुसार स्वयं चलने वाले व विरुद्ध मार्ग को त्याग करने वाले जो थे वे गुरव ब्राह्मण कहाये।

जा० भे० वि० नामक ग्रन्थ में पण्डित पांडोबा गोपाल ने लिखा है कि:—

गुरवः—यांची उत्पत्ति उपासक ब्राह्मण पासून सांगितली आहे, हे लोक देश व कोंकण या दोही ठिकाणा आहेत, हे शिवमंदिरांत पूजा करून व वाजंत्रे आणि वाद्ये वाजवून उदर निर्वाह करितात हे लोक मांस मासली खात नाहींत, व दारूही पीत नाहींत, कोंकणांत एक गुरवांची जात आहेत, त्यां जातीचे लोक मांस मांसली खातात, व दारुही पितात। पृ० ३३७

भावार्थः—गुरवः—इन की उत्पत्ति उपासक ब्राह्मण द्वारा हुई है। ये लोग देश व कोंकण इन दो ही ठिकाने हैं ये लोग शिव मन्दिरों में पूजा करते व बाजे बजा कर निर्वाह करते हैं ये लोग

खान पान से शुद्ध मांस मदिरा नहीं खाते पीते हैं-कोंकण देश में एक गुरवा जाति और होती है जो मांस मछली खाते व शराब पीते रहते हैं।

शास्त्र विधिनुसार पुजारी दो तरह के होते हैं एक तो वेतन लेकर सेवा पूजा व अर्चना करने वाले दूसरे अपना कर्त्तव्य धर्म समझ कर देव पूजा करने वाले, अतः जो लोभ व स्वार्थ वश देव पूजा अर्चना व वन्दना करते हैं वे लघु श्रेणी के पुजारी कहाते हैं पर जो स्वार्थ रहित व कर्त्तव्य समझ कर देव पूजा करते हैं वे उत्तम श्रेणी के ब्राह्मण समझे जाते हैं अतः आजकल जितने ब्राह्मण पुजारी हैं उन में कोई २ को छोड़ कर विशेषता वेतन भोगियों की है पर वे नीच नहीं माने जाते तब गुरव जाति पर ही ऐसा करना अन्याय है।

आजकल हजारों ब्राह्मण सेवा चाकरी व कृषि तथा वाणिज्यादि अनेकों विरुद्ध कर्म करते हैं पर वे ऐसा करते हुये नीच ब्राह्मण नहीं माने जाते तब गुरव ही नीच क्यों?

आज लाखों ब्राह्मणों का निर्वाह अनेकों शास्त्र विरुद्ध कर्मों द्वारा हो रहा है पर वे नीच नहीं कहे व माने जाते हैं तब बेचारी गुरव जाति के साथ ही ऐसा अत्याचार क्यों?

कुछ विदेशी विद्वानों ने भी जाति निर्णय सम्बन्ध में ग्रन्थ लिखे हैं उन्हों में से विज्ञों ने भी यही पिष्ट पेषण किया है, कारण यह कि सहस्रों कोसों दूर के आये हुये लोग हमारे धर्म तत्व को क्या जानें? जैसा एक ने लिखा वैसा ही दूसरे ने व तीसरे ने भी लिख मारा फिर भी वे हमारे धर्माचार्य्य नहीं कहे व माने जा सक्ते हैं। इसलिये वर्तमान लोकाचार व सदाचार प्रणाली व उत्पत्यादि क्रम से निश्चय होता है कि गुरव जाति ब्राह्मण वर्ण में है उसे १६ संस्कार व ६ कर्म करने का अधिकार है।

—

Jayant Bapat
Research paper
of 1998
Regarding origin
of guravs and
dispute of status

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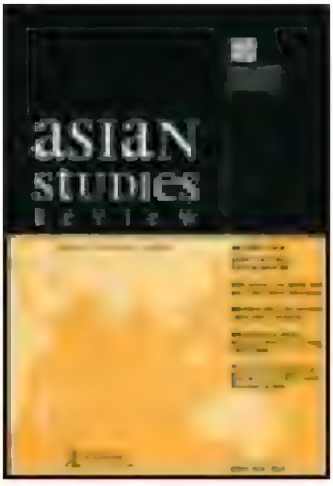

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A Jatipurana (clan-history myth) of the Gurav temple priests of Maharashtra

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A JĀTIPURĀṆA (CLAN-HISTORY MYTH) OF THE GURAV TEMPLE PRIESTS OF MAHARASHTRA

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THE GURAV JĀTIPURĀṆAS

Purāṇic scholarship usually deals with the eighteen Mahāpurāṇas, the same number of secondary or Upa-Purāṇas and occasionally the Sthala or Kshetra-Purāṇas. This last category deals primarily with the religious history and celebration [Mahātmya] of holy places. However, I agree with Bailey who points out (Bailey 1995) that a purāṇic text, in addition to being a literary object, must also be considered as a cultural object that appears at a certain time to fulfil a cultural need during the historical development of Indian culture. Thus, from a sociological and cultural standpoint, one must add to this list an important fourth class, the *Jatipurāṇas* (Caste Purāṇas), which expressly trace the origin of a caste group from a mythological ancestor. These Purāṇas constitute a large body of literature relevant to particular caste groups. Typically in their accounts they span several centuries of narrated time, and although often of dubious historical merit as a record of the actual development of the caste, they can shed important light on the pressures within Hindu society to justify particular positions within the caste system. This aspect of the sociological significance of the *Jātipurāṇas* has largely been ignored in the literature, and as Rocher aptly points out, "they are far more important than our present knowledge of them" (Rocher 1986, 72). In spite of this statement, however, he devotes only one paragraph to *Jātipurāṇas* in his work on Purāṇas.

The *Jātipurāṇas* were composed primarily with a twofold purpose: to establish and to legitimate the placement of a caste group within a caste hierarchy (usually higher than their existing placement in the eyes of the significant others) and, secondly, to detail the exalted or even divine origin of their group.[1] They are thus cast in the traditional style of purāṇic composition. Almost all of them are composed in verse, and, in the Agama style, they are revealed by either a God or

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a Ṛṣi in the form of a dialogue between a seeker of knowledge and an expounder. In this paper, I wish to explore one such *Jātipurāṇa* written on behalf of a priestly community from Maharashtra who call themselves S'aiva-Brahmins or S'aiva-Gurav.

BACKGROUND TO JĀTIPURĀṆAS

The attempt to bring the social reality of *jātis* in line with the ideological notion of their creation from the four fold *varṇa* system through miscegenation is at least as old as the *Manusmṛti*. This reality was characterised by the existence of innumerable closed social groups defined by heredity, pursuit of profession, division of labour, ritual evaluation of lifestyle and occupation, access or denial of the *jāti* to the Vedas and so on. Manu utilised the concepts of miscegenation and hierarchy, i.e., *anuloma* (hypergamy) and *pratiloma* (hypogamy) to explain the diversities of his time. Ever since, hypogamy, which implies sexual transgression on the part of the female, and other types of sexual deviations from the norm, such as adultery or violation of the ritual rules of intercourse, have been used in Hindu social thought to explain the fall of a caste from a higher status. The thousands of resulting *jātis* and *upa-jātis* were termed castes and sub-castes by the Portuguese and the British [Portuguese: *casta*]. It must however be remembered that the separation and divide between the *jātis* quite often remained very vague and difficult; and, as Cohn points out (Cohn 1968), the *jāti*, like the *varṇa*, is "essentially a theoretical level of the Indian social system, of itself possessing no social reality". Cohn's assertion is supported by Silverberg who found that "much social interaction in the Indian peasant community is not merely, not even principally intercaste behaviour" (Silverberg 1959, 150). It is a well established fact that the caste hierarchy was far from being a rigid, die-cast entity. It could be said to be then (and now) in a state of dynamic equilibrium. The system did allow individual castes a measure of mobility. However, as Srinivas correctly notes, "there were only positional changes and the fundamental structure itself remained intact" (Srinivas 1967, 7).

These positional changes were precipitated by one or the other caste, for a variety of reasons. The Weberian equation of the interplay of politics, power and status played a dominant part. For example, the ruling classes, superior in political might, vied with the brahmins for higher social, if not ritual, status. Thus, as early as the reign of the *Rashtrakutas* in Maharashtra, the royalty formed a sub-caste for themselves amongst ks'atriyas called "*Sat Ks'atriyas*", claimed—and apparently were held in—a status even higher than the brahmins (Altekar 1960, 309). Such caste mobility was of course politically determined between the brahmins and ks'atriyas; the literature abounds with such examples. Among the vais'yas and s'udra *varṇa* however, upward mobility vis-à-vis each other was an

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uphill battle. As soon as a caste saw an opportunity, it would make an effort to raise itself. The methods adopted by caste leaders were almost always the same. They would employ a learned and well-respected brahmin to look into their case and come up with a justification for raising their position in the caste hierarchy. To give authenticity to their claim, a powerful and well-to-do caste would go even further: it would commission the brahmin to compose a *Jātipurāṇa* for them. A brahmin could usually be found to undertake such a task, most often for a reward. Occasionally a king, on being approached by a caste, would commission brahmins to study the caste's claim. He would then give a ruling according to the advice received (Das 1968, 141; Hutton 1961, 94; Srinivas 1967, 95). There is no doubt that kings wielded substantial authority in the legitimisation of caste status. Quoting several examples, O'Malley notes that "The king issued marriage regulations for castes, he fixed the social rank of different sub-castes, he promoted members of one caste to another level and he degraded them to a lower" (O'Malley 1974, 56).

The eighteenth century saw the rule of the Peshwas in Maharashtra and Mughal rule in most other parts of India. There is evidence to suggest that both the Peshwas and the Moslem rulers maintained control over caste matters, the latter albeit indirectly (O'Malley 1974, 59). With the takeover by the British, and the consolidation of their legislative power, these functions were inherited by the British rulers. The British were reluctant, especially after the 1857 revolt, to interfere with the socio-religious matters of the Hindu population, but were often forced to do so. O'Malley (1974, 63) noted in 1932 that:

> There is no official control of caste and no state interference with caste customs in British India. The Government follows a policy of non-intervention, for it is a fixed principle that it should not interfere with social laws and personal customs unless there is a general and unequivocal demand for reform on the part of the people themselves. Yet such is the force of the immemorial tradition that the castes expect the British Government to exercise the prerogative of the ancient Hindu kings by prescribing the social status of the castes. At each recurring census, the census authorities are inundated by memorials from different castes petitioning the Government to recognise their claim to a higher rank than they are actually accorded by the Hindu Community at large.

For the ease of administration, for introducing a fair and logical system of justice, and to fulfil their orientalist pursuit, the Imperial government in India embarked upon several courses of action. Their major initiatives were:

1) establishment of a central bureaucratic information gathering machine;

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2) research into the origin, functioning and structure of the caste system with a view to simplifying the administration of the law of the land. Having noted that the law of the land was markedly different for different caste groups, this was a logical course for the British to embark upon;
3) undertaking of ethnographic research resulting in the production of caste histories;
4) introduction of a "Social Preference Scale" classification in the 1901 census which ranked the castes according to their social precedence.

The Imperial Government was of course expanding upon some of the measures already taken earlier by the East India Company. The ethnographers employed by the British attempted to simplify and rationalise the complexities of Indian society and in doing so, gave a disproportionate importance to caste-cluster as a level of the society. As Carroll puts it:

> The ethnological monographs produced by the colonial rulers stimulated similar inquiries by the Indians. The Indian informants . . . went beyond their subsidiary role to compile their own monographs. The Western authorities drew upon these researches by the Indians, who in turn drew upon the Western authorities; the result was the production of a highly interrelated series of "Caste-histories" (Carroll 1978, 233).[2]

This course of action proved to be a threat to the delicate equilibrium of the caste system, albeit inadvertently. The fact that the British were now engaged in a continuous attempt to describe, define, interpret and categorise the social complexity of Indian society enhanced caste consciousness amongst all castes. This was the first time ever that the details of the castes and sub-castes within the population were being reduced to writing by an authority. Also, many caste groups saw, in this Manu-like attempt at defining caste hierarchy, an opportunity to elevate their own caste in the total system. To achieve this goal, *Caste-Sabhas* (Organisations) were rapidly formed which sometimes mounted legal challenges in secular courts against their particular placements in the caste structure. The newly educated amongst the middle and the low castes also researched mythology and caste histories, and wrote about their group or commissioned a brahmin to write *Jātipurāṇas* to support their claims. The *Jātipurāṇas* were by far the best means of mounting a challenge in the colonial period. They were written in the language of the S'astras and were written mostly by brahmins. Both these facts tended to give authenticity to a claim, because both the British and members of the indigenous population held the brahmins in high esteem. In the early period of the British Raj, they were often the only link between the British and the local population.

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It can thus be seen that challenges to caste status in the form of petitions to authority (made preferably with the help of *Jātipurāṇas*) were concerted attempts, albeit from diverse and often opposing quarters, to recast the balance of the regional caste hierarchy. Many *Jātipurāṇas* appeared around AD 1900 in anticipation of the second census to be held a year later. The plots of all *Jātipurāṇas* almost invariably contain common structural elements. In the style of a Purāṇic narrative, a *Jātipurāṇa* describes:

1) the committing of a sin by the caste's distant forebears or the performance of any other behaviour deviating substantially from the norm to which the caste aspires;
2) incurring of the wrath of God or a Seer [Ṛṣi]
3) a resultant curse in the form of a downgrading to a lower (mostly to the s'udra) *varṇa*;
4) expiation of the sin;
5) the rehabilitation at a level lower than original but higher than its erstwhile status.

Employment of this plot structuring device in literature enabled many a caste to lay claim to an original high status and, although immediate success was not always achieved, the device enabled the caste to keep its claim alive so that it could be reactivated at a later date. The laying of a claim in this manner was itself a mark of both modernity and education and hence of status higher than that of other similar castes who had not yet done so. While many of these claims were fanciful, it appears that those of other castes, such as for example those of the S'aiva-Gurav, had a prima facie validity for having a high status in the distant past as suggested by the evidence they put forward in support of their claim.

The Gurav *Jātipurāṇas*, therefore, perhaps not surprisingly, tell us of the Gurav's erstwhile brahmin origin from Sudars'ana, son of the great sage Dadhici. Sudars'ana commits a sin and is cursed by S'iva. As a result of the curse, he loses his right to perform Vedic rituals. Dadhici worships S'iva on behalf of his sons and seeks redress. Pleased with Dadhici's devotion, S'iva appears before him and even though he is unable to take back the curse, gives Sudars'ana and his progeny exclusive rights to S'iva's *pūjā*. The S'aiva-Gurav claim to be the descendants of Sudars'ana.

THE S'AIVA-GURAV AND THEIR JĀTIPURĀṆAS

The Gurav act as temple priests mostly in the S'iva, Devi and Hanuman temples of Maharashtra. As I have explained elsewhere (Bapat 1993, 79), there are many

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different endogamous groups among the Gurav. Those who call themselves S'aiva-Gurav are considered by all Gurav and other castes to be the highest among themselves. It is the S'aiva-Gurav who have laid a claim to brahminhood and there are three *Jātipurāṇas* that support their claim. The first, *Devalaka-Kathāmṛt* was published in 1905, the second, *Sthūla-S'aivāgama*, in 1909 and finally the *Laghu-S'aivagāma* in 1907. The two latter works are mere compilations of chapters from various S'aivite texts compiled by the Gurav for their own communities. In this article I will therefore examine only the *Devalaka Kathāmṛt*.

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The Devalaka Kathāmṛt

This *Jātipurāṇa* is written in Marathi verse. The printed text measures 13 cms × 9 cms and consists of five chapters comprising forty-three pages. The Purāṇa was published at the Jagadittecchu Press in Pune in 1905 and the title page states that it was "written by Balshastri Upasani, a brahmin well versed in the Vedas and S'astras[3] according to the wishes of the late Martand Ramji Gurav Punekar and published by his son Nagesh Martand Gurav". The next page contains an invitation to all Gurav to advertise the book among Gurav brethren and to sell it to them. It advertises that the publishers also wish to put in print information about their daily rituals [*Nityavidhī*] and invites them to send details of such information. This invitation is dated 25 July 1905. Its oblique purpose was to obtain one more proof for the Gurav's brahminic identity. Daily rituals identical to those practised by the brahmins would add weight to the Gurav's claim to brahminhood. I have found no evidence of such work being published.

In the typical traditional style of evocation such a work demands, Upasanishastri devotes the first few pages of chapter one to invoking Ganes'a, the auspicious god, Sarasvati, the goddess of knowledge, and Vālmiki, the first poet-author [*ādikavī*] of the *Rāmāyaṇa*. He then goes on to say that the three of them appeared before him and blessed his work, thus adding one more proof to the authenticity of its content. On page six begins the replication of the typical Purāṇic scene: Vyasa and other sages are engaged in discourse in the Naimiś'a Forest when the sages plead with Vyasa to expound to them the greatness of a deity or to solve a difficult theological problem. Thus, the gathered devotees tell Upansanishastri that he is none other than their Suta[4] and beg him to narrate to them tales of the greatness of S'iva. They then say to him:

> When we visit a S'iva temple, we always see abnormal [*viparita*] practices there. Thus the first *pūjā* is always performed by the Gurav and S'iva and Gauri accept this *pūjā*. Can you therefore explain to us the reasons behind this mystery and also explain to us the genealogy of the Gurav?

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Upasani replies that the great sage Vyasa[5] himself explained the origin of the Gurav in the S'ivapurāṇa. He further adds that, according to him, the person described in Sanskrit by Vyasa as a *Devalaka* is none other than the present day Gurav. Here ends chapter one.

Chapter two starts with the formulaic description of the Naimiś'a Forest as an idyllic place, the abode of the great sages. The forest is full of fruit laden trees and countless shrubs with fragrant flowers. Thick smoke rising from the "Homa" sacrificial fires of the Ṛṣis has blackened the leaves of some of the trees. The Ṛṣis are sitting together with their disciples in the afternoon, some discussing S'astras and Nyāya, others giving lessons in grammar and in music. The Suta enters the scene and the Ṛṣis and brahmins, overwhelmed with joy, ask him to narrate the story of the *devalaka*. He replies that the story of the *devalaka* is sacred and the audience should therefore listen to it carefully. In chapters three and four he then narrates this story:

> There was a great brahmin called Dadhici who knew all the four Vedas, six S'astras and eighteen Purāṇas. He was a great devotee of S'iva whom he worshipped day and night. Dadhici had a son called Sudars'ana and Sudars'ana's wife was called Dus'kulā.[6] She was so named because she was born in a sinful family. One day Dadhici had to go to another town for a meeting with caste members. He therefore instructed Sudars'ana to perform the daily *pūjā* of S'iva in his absence. Sudars'ana naturally obeyed his father. Then the day of Sivarātri came and all S'iva devotees fasted on that day. However, due to his association with his wife and her evil influence, Sudars'ana had become polluted and he was therefore not scared of committing a sin.[7] Thus, he performed the *pūjā* of S'iva on this auspicious day and went home. However, instead of fasting, he had dinner with his wife at night and then had intercourse with her as well. Next morning, he got up in a hurry and went to S'iva's temple without taking a bath. In that impure state, he performed S'iva's *pūjā*. S'iva was infuriated and appeared before Sudars'ana in his terrible form with five heads, and ten hands all holding shining armour. The fire of the destruction of the world poured out of his eyes. He kicked Sudars'ana and told him that there was no sinner greater than him. The god said that Sudars'ana had committed three unpardonable sins: consuming food on a sacred day instead of fasting, engaging in intercourse on such a day and finally, performing his *pūjā* without first taking the purificatory bath. For these sins, S'iva cursed Sudars'ana and turned him into a stone. The curse took immediate effect; Sudars'ana turned into a stone while Dus'kulā died instantly from grief. Sudars'ana was denied entry into heaven and returned to earth. Grief-stricken by his wife's death, he cremated her

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and cursed himself for being the one responsible for all the terrible happenings and that he was paying for his sins in his previous births.

Chapter four continues the story:

Having heard this terrible news, Dadhici returned home in a hurry and blamed Sudars'ana for inviting the wrath of S'iva. He then invoked S'iva and his consort Pārvati. He pleaded with them and said that since Sudars'ana was their son, they should therefore forgive him. Pleased with Dadhici's penance, Pārvati appeared before Dadhici and begged S'iva to forgive Sudars'ana. S'iva appeared before Sudars'ana and holding his hand, made Sudars'ana sit next to him.

S'iva then gave Sudars'ana the sacred thread with three strands and also initiated him in the very sacred S'iva-Gāyatri Mantra.[8] He advised Sudars'ana to worship Gauri (Bhavāni, Pārvati) first and then perform the detailed sixteen part *pūjā* of S'iva.[9] The god then gave Sudars'ana many boons and gave him the prime place among his devotees. He advised that the first worship of the day would be performed from then on by Sudars'ana (and his descendants) and by no one else. He also allowed Sudars'ana to appropriate for his own use the offerings of grain, cloth, ghee, etc. brought to the temple by other devotees. The god further stressed that no *pūjā* would be complete unless Sudars'ana said, "Let it be so". S'iva also insisted that on auspicious occasions there should be at least one Gurav[10] among the brahmins who are fed, otherwise the deed would not be meritorious. S'iva then appointed Sudars'ana's four sons as religious mentors to the four corners of earth. He then explained the Dharma (of the *Devalaka*) to Sudars'ana. This consisted of 1) a ritual daily bath in a sacred river; 2) rigorous performance of the rituals; 3) putting a round sandalwood mark [*tilaka*] on the forehead;[11] and 4) performance of the S'ivasandhyā. S'iva said that Sudars'ana should perform the S'ivasandhyā three times a day, recite the S'iva-Gāyatri all the time and worship Pārvati before the worship of any other god. He also decreed that Sudars'ana must not recite mantras from the Vedas, and that he should respect brahmins and eat only vegetarian food.

The bar on reciting the Vedic Mantras was extended to Sudars'ana's progeny as well. S'iva said that, although the progeny of Sudars'ana had lost their vedic rites, they should worship him constantly and that he was giving a special name "*Devalaka*" (temple priest) to them. The god said that no one ought to perform his *pūjā* before a *Devalaka* did it. He decreed that a *Devalaka* must be respected whether he be pure or sinful. Those who fed brahmins in order to please S'iva or Pārvati ought to

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include at least one *Devalaka* amongst the invitees. When the *Devalaka* was satiated by the meal, then S'iva himself would be equally happy. Here ends chapter four.[12]

In the fifth and final chapter, the story of the great king Bhadrasen is told which affirms the new status of the *Devalaka* objectively:

Bhadrasen conquered the whole world. He remained, however, extremely kind to all his people and he was also a great devotee of S'iva. Pleased with his singular devotion, S'iva appeared before him and offered him whatever he wanted, including Indra's throne. Bhadrasen refused to ask for any material reward. However, he asked S'iva to grant him some means that would act as an indicator to show if Bhadrasen had fulfilled his daily rituals and duties. S'iva therefore gave Bhadrasen a special pennant and asked him to raise it every morning. If Bhadrasen performed his daily duties properly, then the pennant would fall to the ground. However, in spite of all his good deeds including feeding thousands of brahmins daily, the pennant remained upstanding. The saddened king did not know what to do. One day a *Devalaka* visited the king and was fed along with the brahmins. The pennant fell to the ground instantly. The brahmins then explained to the king that it was due to the very special meritorious deed of feeding a *Devalaka* that the pennant fell. They also explained to him that feeding even a *crore* (ten million) of brahmins was not much good unless a *Devalaka* was fed as well. They also stated that the right to his first *pūjā* of the day was given by S'iva himself to the *Devalaka*. After that event, Bhadrasen made sure that a *Devalaka* was properly fed and clothed every day.

To end the chapter and the Purāṇa, Upasanishastri says that this historical account of the *Devalaka* was narrated by the Suta to S'aunaka and other Ṛṣis, and that he, Upasanishastri, is now telling it to the gathered devotees. He says that just as S'iva and S'ankara are the two names of the same god, *Ghata* and *Ghāgara* are the two names for the same pot, S'arkarā and Sākhar are the two names for the same sugar, similarly, *Devalaka* and Gurav are the two names for the same people.

Upasani finally declares that those Gurav who read this Purāṇa everyday[13] will be looked after by S'iva and will acquire a good family, wealth and happiness. The Purāṇa ends here.

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THE DEVALAKA KATHĀMṚT: AN ANALYSIS

As Veena Das argues (Das 1967–68, 141), it is very rewarding to treat a *Jātipurāṇa* as a sociological resource. The best way to approach this problem in the case of the *Devalaka Kathāmṛt* is to pose a series of questions as follows:

1) What prompted the Gurav to write/commission this *Purāṇa*?
2) Is this *Purāṇa* authentic in terms of the accepted fictional social history of the Gurav? In what sense are "the facts" provided in them acceptable?
3) What is the logic of validation of this *Purāṇa* used by the Gurav?
4) Has the acquisition of this *Purāṇa* by the Gurav had the desired effect in raising the status of the Gurav community?
5) Do other castes accept the Gurav claim?

I shall attempt to answer these questions in light of the available background information about the status of the S'aiva-Gurav in Marathi society. I will begin with the second question, as it relates directly to the subject of the legitimisation of the Gurav as a caste and also throws light on the logic of validation of this *Purāṇa*.

Although a *Jātipurāṇa* is a sacred text, it is designed to fulfil the cultural aspirations and needs of the group of people who are its subject. These people would then take the myths conveyed in this *Purāṇa* as evidence of their caste status so as to submit their claims of belonging to a particular earlier caste, invariably higher in status than their erstwhile position. In other words, the *Jātipurāṇa* serves as a strong statement of intention to lodge such a claim on the part of the community involved. For it to attain such a position, one of the major criteria the *Jātipurāṇa* must fulfil is that it must appear authentic in terms of convergence with the traditionally sanctioned yet fictional social history found in the *Purāṇa*, and it must be taken as part of the caste *Paramparā*.

The *Devalaka Kathāmṛt* was authored by a brahmin, Upasanishastri. His work shows all the hallmarks of a classical *Purāṇa*. As tradition demanded, Upasani sought to prove, first of all, that the *Purāṇa* was authentic in terms of the *Purāṇic* tradition. In order to do so, he linked his work directly to an ancient text like the *S'ivapurāṇa*, thus bringing sanction through tradition [*paramparā*] to his work. It also made his work as authentic as the *S'ivapurāṇa*. He was also able to model his work stylistically on the *S'ivapurāṇa* story, claiming that whatever he had to say was not at all new since it had appeared in the S'astras before and that he was thus a mere mortal who was ordered by god to produce the work. Hence his claim that Ganes'a, Sarasvati, the goddess of knowledge, and Vālmiki, the author of the *Rāmāyaṇa*, appeared before him and sanctioned his work. As the formula demanded humility of all mortal authors, Upasani said that, "he knew that as an author he was most inferior but he was also convinced that god would forgive him

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for his transgression." This tendency is to be understood in terms of "Canons of legitimisation in traditional Sanskritic learning" (Das 1967–68, 152). Later authors try to graft their work onto celebrated older authors in order to make their own words appear authentic.

Replication of archaic forms of literature is another important device that Upasani uses in the process of legitimisation. He thus opens up with salutations to Ganes'a, Sarasvati and Vālmiki.[14] The narrative then proceeds in the classical *purāṇic* style. As the third device in the legitimisation process, the *Devalaka* appears as the ancient temple priest and the story is woven around the *Devalaka* myth in the *S'ivapurāṇa*. The myth must now explain, why, in spite of his s'udra ways, the Gurav is a brahmin. Hence the story of Sudars'ana and S'iva's curse. The restoration of Sudars'ana as S'iva's premier devotee comes at the expense of the loss of the right to Vedic *mantras*, an expiation for the sin. Being a select devotee, Sudars'ana (and hence the Gurav) is allowed to keep for his own use the offerings made by other devotees to S'iva. Thus a justification is created for the Gurav to accept money and other gifts for his services. This introduces a different form of legitimisation than the two discussed above. The legitimisation is attempted here through arguments made in a myth, whereas the previous devices sought to legitimise the Gurav through broad appeal to tradition. As Das would put it (Das 1967–68, 151), the myth that the Gurav wish to contend may be syllogistically summarised as follows:

1) All brahmins have a particular style of sacred life;
2) the Gurav do not have this style;
3) therefore they are not brahmins;
4) the Gurav fell into non-brahmin ways due to a sin committed by their ancestor Sudars'ana;
5) expiation followed and the Gurav were given exclusive rights to S'iva's *pūjā* and were also allowed to keep for their own use the offerings to S'iva made by other devotees;
6) therefore, although the right to Vedic rites has been taken away, the Gurav are really brahmins.

This brings me to the fourth question of whether the acquisition of the *Purāṇa* had the desired effect for the Gurav? In other words, has it arguably raised the status of the Gurav? There is some evidence to believe that the argument is accepted by both parties as an interim measure, a contention. The outcome is thus a compromise, not a solution. The Gurav remains a "select devotee" but does not rise in caste status. The brahmin dare not enter the *sanctum sanctorum* until the Gurav has done his first *pūjā* in the morning. And although he is clearly unhappy and jealous of the Gurav's daily income, he has never challenged it. The

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brahmin on the other hand refuses to entertain the Gurav's claim to brahmin *varṇa*.[15] One thus deals with two separate categories and the conflict is dissolved but not resolved. The Gurav accept the status quo not only because they have obtained official sanction for the use of the offerings made to S'iva but also because they have reserved the right to being the exclusive *Pujāris* in S'iva temples. Furthermore, they have kept their claim to brahminhood alive. The brahmins accept it, albeit grudgingly, because they have succeeded in keeping the Gurav out of the elite brahmin class. And although the partial success of the Gurav in achieving his goal must be attributed to several factors, the *Jātipurāṇas* must account for a substantial proportion of it.

On formal bureaucratic and religious levels, the S'aiva-Gurav have been far more successful and they have been able to appropriate the nomenclature of S'aiva brahmins. This can be seen from the fact that when the S'ankarācārya of S'ringeri Math came to the town of Wai in Maharashtra in 1811 he accepted their claim to brahminhood after discussion with the Gurav community there (Upadhye 1913). However, it is difficult to ascertain what precise role the above *Purāṇa* played in raising their status. I have little doubt that at the very least, it would have united the S'aiva-Gurav together in their disputes over status with the colonial bureaucracy and the brahmins. Thus in 1911, in a dispute before the collector of Solapur district, the Gurav were allowed to write their caste as "S'aiva brahmins", albeit as a compromise.[16] Also, in a law suit in 1938, the Gurav were able to get Nyayaratna Vinod, a well known Marathi brahmin pandit and scholar to give evidence in court on their behalf that the S'aiva-Gurav were in fact brahmin. Vinod is said to have spent several weeks studying S'astras and *Purāṇas* before he came to this conclusion (Vinod 1984, 154).

It must however be remembered that the brahmins of Maharashtra have never taken the Gurav's claim to brahminhood seriously and such determination on the official level has made no difference to the treatment meted out to the Gurav by the brahmins at the societal level. While in other parts of India where S'aivite temple priests are considered to be lower-class brahmins, the Marathi brahmins have always considered the Gurav to be a s'udra. This is because the former generally quote a Vedic reference (Israel 1987, 145) whenever their exclusivity and status are challenged, and declare that in the Kali age, the ks'atriyas and vais'yas ceased to exist and thus only two *varṇas* remained: the brahmins and the s'udras. Not being accepted as brahmins, the Gurav are regarded as s'udras. Therefore, when the British sought to formalise the *varṇa* and *jāti* identity for each group within Hinduism through the 1901 census, the Gurav, like many other castes, saw it as an opportunity to raise themselves in the *varṇa* hierarchy. The fact that they firmly believed that they were brahmins—and also that they had a number of historical facts on their side—added weight to their claim. Part of the answer to question one regarding what prompted the Gurav to produce

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these *Jātipurāṇas* is now patently obvious: the desire of the Gurav to challenge their placement into the s'udra *varṇa* and to lay claim to belonging to the brahmin *varṇa*. However, it appears that the S'aiva Gurav had two other major concerns. These were: firstly, the need to justify their lack of education in general and lack of knowledge of Sanskrit and the S'astras in particular; and secondly, the need to show their superiority over the Lingāyats [*Viras'aivas*] who had taken over the priestly functions in many important S'iva shrines in Maharashtra. The modern day Gurav are painfully aware of their lack of education and lack of knowledge of S'astras. They are, therefore, at pains to point out that their forebears were generally well read and educated. What better examples of this can one find than the two *Jātipurāṇas*, *Sthūls'aivāgama* and *Laghus'aivāgama*, produced by two members of their own community? That both authors were able to peruse Sanskrit literature at length, interpret it and provide a detailed commentary, would in itself have proven the truth of their claims. Once again, no s'udras could have done this as they were prohibited from learning the divine language.[17] Also, the father of the author of the *Sthūls'aivāgama*, Bhagawanstswami Jehurkar held the title of "Vedamurti" (one who is the image of Vedas), a title used to refer to one with a deep knowledge of the Vedas. His title of "Swami" suggests that he was a Sanyasin and that he also stayed in a Math. Similarly, a present day Gurav from Madhya Pradesh by the name of Omdatta Arya has written a book entitled *Gaurav* in Hindi (Arya 1981). This book also deals with the Sudars'ana myth. Omdatta's guru and father was a well-respected Gurav who became a Sanyasin in his old age.

EPILOGUE

Although acting as temple priests may be their "right" as far as the Gurav are concerned, to the other brahmins it has always been paid temple service. The *Devalaka* brahmin, claimed by the Gurav as their ancestor, appears even at the time of the *Manusmṛti* (Jha 1939) as a brahmin of lower standing because he performs temple service for money. To the brahmins this is against the brahmin "Dharma" of avoiding contractual payment of any kind for religious services performed. Brahmins have always differentiated between the *Daks'inā* they receive for performing rituals and the regular income of the temple priest. The *Daks'inā* is an honorarium which also imparts merit [*puṇya*] to the host. The amount of *Daks'ina* can vary considerably depending on the financial position and wishes of the donor. As against this, the temple priest receives a regular income and orthodox brahmins have frowned upon this. Since the Gurav as temple priests do not observe this brahmin "Dharma", they are non-brahmins and hence s'udras to the Marathi brahmins. All over India, the lower status of the

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temple priest has been a point of great debate and as stated earlier, Indologists such as Kane, Stietenkron, Fuller and Appadorai have suggested various explanations for the phenomenon. The above differentiation based on the Dharma of the brahmin and that of the s'udra is one such explanation.

It is significant to note that the Gurav are not jockeying for a superior position vis-à-vis any other caste. They are simply ascertaining their priestly brahmin status. And while many Gurav claims to brahminhood arose just prior to the time of the 1911 Indian census, the Gurav attempts to establish their brahmin status, such as their claim before the S'ankarācārya in 1811, predate the census by at least a hundred years. The ritual awareness and assertiveness of the Gurav is certainly pre-British. Another point worth noting about the Gurav claim of 1811 before the S'ankarācārya is that they chose to go to him rather than the state, in this instance, the Peshwa. The Peshwas were brahmins and it would therefore have been difficult to approach them. It is unlikely that they would have entertained the Gurav claim.

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NOTES

[1]I use the words *jāti* and *caste* interchangeably in this paper.

[2]In a scathing attack on Herbert Risley, the well known British ethnographer who published such complete caste histories in his "People of India", Ronald Inden remarks, "previous accounts of castes had been drawn from texts composed by the self-serving Brahmans or had been anecdotal, penned by Western travellers, missionaries or revenue-collectors. Now we were to have fully systemic and scientific, that is, quantitative knowledge of India's essence" (Inden 1990, 58–59).

[3]*Vedas'āstrasampanna* is a title bestowed upon a brahmin who has learned the four Vedas and six S'astras rigorously.

[4]As early as Vedic times, sutas represent a class of people who are brahmins born out of *Pratiloma* (hypogamaous) unions (*Manusmṛti* 10:17). The *Padmapurāṇa* says that the main duty of sutas is to sing praises of great kings and construct genealogies of gods, Ṛṣis and great kings (*Padmapurāṇa:* 1:1:28).

[5]The great mythical sage Vyasa is claimed to be the originator of all the eighteen main *Purāṇas.* See *Mahāpurāṇas.*

[6]In the *Devalaka* myth in the *S'ivapurāṇa* and in all three Gurav *Jātipurāṇas,* Dus'kulā has been portrayed as the instigator of the sin of having intercourse on a holy day. Dus'kulā is not a name that any parents would choose for their daughter. Her name therefore is generic and signifies a sinful woman. Laying the blame on her is a device by which the authors keep the blame away from Sudars'ana. It also reflects on the society of the time when women were considered inferior, polluting and inauspicious. (*Dus'kulā* means "one of an evil family".)

[7]Upasani comments here that, "As it is, women are inauspicious and polluted. On top of this, Dus'kulā came from a sinful family. It was therefore hardly surprising that Dus'kulā's husband Sudars'ana would entertain sinful thoughts as well". *Devalaka Kathāmṛt.*

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[8]The S'iva-Gāyatri Mantra is *Om Namaḥ S'ivāya.* The Vedic Mantra given to the Brahmins at the Sacred Thread Ceremony, the *Upanayana,* is the Gāyatri Mantra addressed to Savitṛ, the sun god. Neither the *S'ivapurāṇa* nor the Gurav *Jātipurāṇas* explain why Sudars'ana, the son of the brahmin Ṛṣi Dadhici, got the *S'iva-Gāyatri Mantra.* The Vedic Gāyatri is also a metre. *Siva-Gāyatri* is chantable but is not in the Vedic metre.

[9]*Sodas'opacāra Pūjā* is the complete sixteen-part worship that can be offered to any god. See Gudrun Bmhemann 1988.

[10]It is significant to see that the word "Gurav" appears only in the Gurav *Jātipurāṇas;* the *S'ivapurāṇa* mentions only the *Devalaka* (temple priest). As the Gurav are the present temple priests, they claim to be descendants of Sudars'ana, and that they made the change from *Devalaka* to Gurav. The point is that the Maharashtrian Gurav do need to bridge the gap between themselves and the *Purāṇic Devalaka.*

[11]The brahmins who worship Viṣṇu put three vertical lines on their foreheads, the S'aivites put the *tripundra* mark (three horizontal lines) on their foreheads, whereas the Gurav put a *tilaka,* a circular dot, on their foreheads. Neither the *S'ivapurāṇa* nor the Gurav *Jātipurāṇas* explain why the S'iva temple priest has to be different from the other brahmins in this diacritical mark.

[12]Each chapter of this *Jātipurāṇa* ends as follows: "Those who are known as *Devalakas* in the Sanskrit language are without doubt the Gurav (of the present day). Let everyone hear this biography of them. It is dedicated to S'iva, Sāmbasadās'iva". *Devalaka Kathamṛt,* ch. 1, p. 8, verse 41; ch. 2, p. 14, verse 26; ch. 3, p. 20, verse 28; ch. 4, p. 29, verse 45 and ch. 5, p. 43, verse 66.

[13]Few modern day Gurav seem even to know about the existence of this *Purāṇa,* let alone read it daily.

[14]The choice of Vālmiki instead of Vyasa is interesting. Vālmiki, the author of the *Rāmayāṇa,* came from a low caste. There is a caste that claims to be Vālmiki-Brahmins who perform the rites of the untouchables.

[15]I attended a religious festival at a S'iva temple in Satara, Maharashtra State, in January 1992. At the conclusion of the festival there was a feast at which the Gurav and his family were not allowed to eat alongside the brahmins. As the custom dictated, they were asked to bring their own utensils and food was transferred into these from above, without contact by the brahmin cooks. The brahmins would not even touch the utensils. The Gurav and his family then helped themselves and had to sit together in one corner, well away from the brahmins.

[16]The census officials had included the Gurav as s'udras. The Gurav challenged this classification and the matter went before the collector. Upon hearing the Gurav claim, the collector made the above determination.

[17]Except for the brahmin and ks'atriya men, women and the lower castes were not allowed to learn and speak Sanskrit. They could only use Prakṛt. This practice is evident in Sanskrit literature, in the plays of Kalidasa, for example, where even the queen can speak only in Prakṛt.

[18]I have discussed this aspect of the Gurav-Lingayat interaction at some length in an extensive treatment of Gurav Jātipurāṇas soon to be published in the *International Journal of Hindu Studies.*

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माइसंमं त्रैमासिक ६० : १-४, १९८१

कोकण प्रांतातील गुरव समाज

रा. ना. केळकर

वादेंश, गोवा

कोकणातील गुरव समाजाची वस्ती गोवा प्रांत, सावंतवाडी, मालवण वगैरे भागांत असून त्यांच्याकडे देवाच्या पूजावृत्ती असतात. त्यावरूनच देवाच्या पूजा करणाऱ्यांस गुरव असे म्हणण्याची प्रथा पडलेली आहे. काही देवस्थानांत मराठ्यांकडे पूजावृत्ती असते त्यांसही तेथे गुरवच म्हणतात पण त्यांची आडनावे परब, राऊत, राऊळ अशी असतात व ते आपणास मराठेच म्हणवितात. पण येथे ज्या गुरवांविषयी लिहीत आहो ते आपणास शैव ब्राह्मण म्हणवितात. जुन्या कागदपत्रांतून त्यांची आडनावे केवळ गुरव अशीच आहेत.

जुन्या काळी जेव्हा आडनावे स्थिर झाली नव्हती तेव्हा भट, शेणवी, जोशी, भावीण, गायक कलावंतीण, कुळंबीण, फजेंद, न्हावी, परीट, सुतार, चांभार, महार अशी जातीविषयक नावे लिहीत असत. त्याकाळी पूजा करणारा गुरु गुरव असे जातीविषयक आडनाव लिहीत असावेत.

कोकण प्रांतात चित्पावन, कऱ्हाडे, पंचे हे पौरोहित्य करीत, आपल्या नावापुढे भट हे नाव लिहीत व पुढे मग गावाचे नाव लिहीत. त्यानंतर सगळेच पंचद्राविड आपल्या नावापुढे भट्ट लिहीत व सारस्वत शेणवी असे लिहीत. गोव्यांत बोरी शिरोडे भागांतील काही पक्षांस प्रभु या नावामागे भट्ट येऊन त्याचेच भट्ट-प्रभु झाले व मग काही काळाने तो भट्ट प्रभु समाज म्हणूनच ओळखण्यात येऊ लागला. गुरवांच्या नावापुढे भट्ट किंवा शेणवी किंवा प्रभु लिहीत नाहीत. गोवा सरकारच्या जुन्या कागदपत्रांतूनही त्यांचा गुरव म्हणूनच उल्लेख केलेला आहे. ब्राह्मणात त्यांचा समावेश केलेला नाही. यावरूनही गुरव ही एक स्वतंत्र जाती होती असे दिसते.

गुरव मांसाहारी अगर मत्स्याहारीही नाहीत. राहाणी साधारणपणे द्राविड ब्राह्मणांसारखी असून त्यांच्यात मौंजिबंधन, विवाह, गर्भदानादी संस्कार आहेत. श्राद्ध महालयादी नित्य नैमित्तिके आहेत. ते डोकीस आडवे अगर उभे गंध न लावता टिकली लावीत. वस्त्रांचा पेहेराव राहाणी ब्राह्मणासारखीच आहे. ब्राह्मणेतर लोकांत नथ वापरण्याची पद्धत आहे. त्यांच्यात विधवा वपन होते. आंगावर गोंदून घेणे वगैरे गोष्टी नाहीत. यांच्याकडचे पौरोहित्य द्राविड ब्राह्मण करीत व ते पुराणोक्त मंत्रांनी करीत.

देव-देवतांत शाळिग्राम, बाण, नर्मदा गणपती अशा देवता नाहीत. मृताच्या नावाने ठेवलेला नारळ व दामदुहू असत. यावरून या समाजात मृतास गंधाधुपास आणण्याची पद्धत असली पाहिजे. ही चाल दशविध ब्राह्मणांत नाही.

हे शाकाहारी असूनही सारस्वतांकडचे जेवण त्यास चालत असले पाहिजे असे वाटते. याचे कारण मांद्रे, कोरगाव, आसगांवबाडा, पार्से या गावात गुरव होते. ते देसाई सारस्वत यांच्याकडची शिजविलेल्या अन्नाची नैवेद्याची पाने त्यांच्याकडील देवकार्यांच्या वेळी आणीत असत. उलट सारस्वतांकडील देवकार्यांच्या वेळी गावाच्या देवाला नैवेद्य दाखवितात. त्यात नारायण सत्पुरुष यांचा जो नैवेद्य आहे तो शिजलेल्या अन्नाचा न दाखविता कोरडा शिधा द्राविड ब्राह्मणांकडे देऊन नैवेद्य करण्यास लावतात. कोरगाव, पार्से येथेही अशीच पद्धती होती. सप्तेश्वर भगवती व इतर देवता यांचे नैवेद्य शिजविलेल्या अन्नाचे दाखवितात व ती पाने गुरवास देतात. रवळनाथचा नैवेद्य सुतारास देतात व काही देवतांचे नैवेद्य त्या देवतांचे पूजारी मराठे कोरे जे असतात त्यास देतात.

यांचा धंदा मुख्यतः शिवलिंग, भगवती, रवळनाथ वगैरे देवतांची पूजा करणे त्यास प्रसाद लावणे, त्यांचे तरंग घेणे, पालखीसमोर आरती घेऊन फिरणे, देवस्थानांतील गाऱ्हाणे घालणे, चव्हाटयावरच्या झाडपाचे गाऱ्हाणे घालणे असा असे. कोरगावी कमळेश्वराची पालखी गुरवाने द्यावयाची असते. त्याच्या मोबदलेरीत कमळेत जोशी घेतो.

ही वरील कामे, व शिवलिंग, रवळनाथ, वेताळ यांचे नैवेद्य भक्षण करणे व श्री शिवलिंगावरचे निर्माल्य काढणे हा गोष्टी द्राविड ब्राह्मण निषिद्ध मानीत. त्यामुळे बहुतेक प्रत्येक गावी श्री. नारायण वगैरे विष्णु देवतांच्याच पूजा फक्त द्राविड ब्राह्मणांकडे होत्या. शिवलिंग, भगवती, रवळनाथ यांच्या पूजा गुरवांकडे असत. पंचांगवाचनादि धार्मिक कामे ब्राह्मणांकडे असत व आजही आहेत.

गुरव समाजात वेदाध्ययनादी परंपरा नाही. तथापि मौंजीबंधन आहे. पूर्वी वैवर्णिकात मौंजिबंधन विधी होता. त्यामुळे मौंजिबंधन विधी हा केवळ ब्राह्मणांचे गमक ठरत नाही हे येथे या संदर्भात लक्षात घेण्यासारखे आहे.

या समाजाची आरवली, पेडणे, चोपडे, मोरजे, कोरगाव, मांद्रे, आसगावबाडा, मातोंड, आजगाव, वालावल, कुळस, धारगळ, पार्से, शिरगाव, सांतेरी, म्हादोळ, बोरी पैकी आज पेडणे, आरवली, मातोंड या ठिकाणी गुरव आहेत. या समाजाची लोकसंख्या शंभर वर्षांत कमी झाल्याचे दिसते.

गोव्यात वाटावाटीच्या पूर्वी बारदेश सासष्टी वगैरे भागात गुरव प्रत्येक गावात असले पाहिजेत. आसगावहून (बार्देश) श्रीरवळनाथ देवस्थान मांद्रयास गेले. हणजूणचा देव, शिवोलकरांचा देव, ओशेलचा देव, सळगावचा देव, शिरोडा, पोंचुर्पा हे देव हणजूण, आसगाव, सिओली, मारणे या भागात जोशी, पुराणिक, अभिषेकी, भट

यांच्या प्रमाणेच गुरवांचे भाटले, गुरव नगस, गुरवाची कुणगी अशा जमिनींची नावे कागदोपत्री आहेत.

गोव्यातील सुप्रसिद्ध म्हालसादेवीच्या देवळात व शिरोडा (फोंडी) येथील श्री कामाक्षा देवीकडे पुजारी म्हणून गुरव होते. आता तेथे सारस्वत आहेत. आमच्या मते जी देवस्थाने सार्वजनिक सगळ्या जातींची म्हणून होती त्या देवस्थानांत गुरव व जोशी होते. म्हणून म्हालसा देवी अगर कामाक्षा देवी तसेच आसगाव, साळगाव वगैरे ठिकाणचे देव केवळ सारस्वतांचेच नसावेत असे दिसते.

मांद्रे येथे गुरवाचे भाटले, सखाराया गुरवमळो, गणवा गुरव अशा नावांच्या जमिनी आहेत. त्यावरून या गावात गुरवांची वस्ती बरीच जुनी आहे असे म्हणता येते. सध्या या वृत्ती भटांकडे आहेत. कोरगांवी कमळेश्वराकडे, मोरजीस मोरजाई देवस्थानात, मातोंड, आसलो (शिरोडा), पेडणे या देवस्थानांत गुरव आहेत.

मांद्रे येथील देवस्थानात श्री सप्तेश्वर, भगवती, रवळनाथ व इतर देवतांच्या पूजा करणे, प्रसाद लावणे, भूतनाथाचा तरंग घेणे, देवस्थानांत गाऱ्हाणे सांगणे, वसन्तोत्सवातील तरंगासमोर लंजीर घेऊन मुताराघरोवर ' भले रे, भले रे, भले ' असे नाथणे घरहाठयावरील डाळपाचे गाऱ्हाणे सांगणे ही कामे होती. दशावतारी नाटकास सुरुवात होण्यापूर्वी पंचारती घेऊन गुरवाने नाचावयाचे असते. शिमग्यांत शेवटच्या दिवशी वाळवाची सोंगे आणतात. त्यात गुरवाने भाग घ्यावयाचा असतो. या देवस्थानातील श्रीनारायणाची व श्रीसत्पुरुषाची पूजा व नैवेद्य द्राविड ब्राह्मणांकडेच पूर्वीपासून आहे. शिमग्याचे वळसवाणो वाटावयाचे असते ते गुरव वाटतो.

मोरजे देवस्थानात वळसाच्या जत्रेतील वळसाच्या पूजेपूर्वी गुरवाने पुण्याह वाचनास बसावयाचे असते. व पुण्याहवाचनास बसण्यापूर्वी परब पेरणी यांच्या बरोबर क्षौर विधी करावयाचा असतो. त्यांच्या बायकोनेही हातांतील एक बांगडी फोडणे व एक केस तोडणे असे करावे लागते. वळसाची पूजाअर्चा गुरवाकडे असते. व त्याने तीन वेळा होरसाणी करावयची असते. भगवतीचे व महिषासुराचे सोंग काढतात त्यावेळी भगवतीचे सोंग गुरवाने घ्यावयाचे असते. वळसाच्या जत्रेच्या शेवटच्या दिवशी डोंकीवर वळस घ्यावयाचा असतो. आषाढ महिन्यांत नांगराची पूजा करावयाची तो गुरवाने बसून करावयाची व पौरोहित्य कर्मवंत जोइयाने करावयाचे असे आहे. पूर्वी नांगरास बैल जुंपण्याऐवजी माणसांनी नांगर ओढावयाचा असे.

मांद्रे येथेही महिषासुर मर्दिनीचे सोंग काढीत त्यावेळी श्रीभगवतीचे सोंग देवळी घेई. आसगाव वाडयावर आसगाव देवस्थानात ताटाची जत्रा आश्विन शु. १० व श्रावण शुद्ध पौर्णिमा या दोन वेळी होते. त्यावेळी गुरवाने ताट घ्यावयाचे असते. पालखी समोरची आरत गुरव घेतो व दशावतारी जत्रेपूर्वी आरत घेऊन नाचतो.

पेडणे येथे तरंगाची जत्रा असते त्यावेळी घ्यावयाचे तरंग गुरवाने घ्यावयाचे असतात. कोरगाव कमळेश्वराकडे प्रसाद लावणे, पूजा करणे ही कामे गुरव करतो.

आगरखाडा येथील श्री सतेरी देवीची पूजा पूर्वीपासून क्रमवंत जोश्यांकडे होती. आता चित्पावनांकडे आहे. तेथे नवरात्रांत व जत्रेत पालखी काढतात. त्याकेळी पालखीच्या समोरची आरत घेण्यासाठी व मांडीवर अवसरासाठी तसेच गुरवाने जी कामे करावयाची असतात त्यासाठी पारसे अगर चोपडे येथील गुरव येतो व त्याबद्दल त्यास त्या देवस्थानातून एक खंडी भात मिळते. ही सनद देवस्थानच्या नियमावलीतही नोंदलेली आहे. पूर्वीच्या कागदपत्रांत तशी नोंद आहे व परंपरागत रूढीही तशीच आहे. यावरून भट लोक पालखी समोरची आरत घेणे निषिद्ध मानीत असे दिसते.

प्रत्येक देवस्थानांत गुरव असूनही ब्राह्मण असतो. देवावर अभिषेक करणे, समाराधनेचा स्वयंपाक करणे व ब्राह्मण संतर्पण करणे, पुराण सांगणे, विष्णु देवता असल्यास तिची पूजा करणे ही कामे द्राविड ब्राह्मणांकडेच असतात.

या बाजूच्या प्रत्येक देवस्थानात 'ब्राह्मण' नावाचा देव असतो व त्याच्या मूर्तीच्या जागी गुळगुळीत पाषाण असतो. काही ठिकाणी शिवलिंग असते. अशा ठिकाणी हे दोन 'ब्राह्मण' असतात. पैकी एकास केवळ 'ब्राह्मण' अगर काही ठिकाणी 'काशिकल्याणी ब्राह्मण' व दुसऱ्यास 'जैन ब्राह्मण' म्हणतात. प्रत्येक गावच्या मुख्य देवस्थानात जैन ब्राह्मणाचा पाषाण असतो व गाऱ्हाण्यांत 'अगा तूं जैन विरामणा' असा उल्लेख असतो. या जैन ब्राह्मणास हे लोक आपला कुलपुरुष मानितात. यावरून गुरव हे जैन ब्राह्मण असावेत अशी शंका येते. पण हिंदू धर्मांहून जैन धर्म निराळा आहे. यावरून इकडे जैन धर्माचा प्रसार होऊन त्यांचा समावेश हिंदूंच्या देवस्थानात झाला की हिंदूंचा शिरकाव जैनांच्या देवळात झाला हा एक अभ्यसनीय विषय आहे. आसगाव गावचे जे देव मांद्रयास आले त्यात भूमिकेच्या देवळांत भूमिका व शिवलिंग यांच्यामध्ये जैन ब्राह्मण नावाचा देव आहे. सोरज, मांद्रे, पेडणे, पार्से, आगरवाडो, चोपडे, या देवस्थानांत जैन ब्राह्मण आहे.

म्हापशाचे सुप्रसिद्ध संशोधक कै. वामनराव अनंत शेट खलप यांनी, 'गोमंतकातील सामुदायिक मालकीची ग्रामसंस्था पडती, या नावाचे एक पुस्तक इ. स. १९५५ मध्ये प्रसिद्ध केले आहे. त्यात ग्रामसंस्थेच्या नोकरवर्गांत गुरवांचा उल्लेख आहे. त्यात पृ. ५१ वर "रवळ रावळ गुरव यास वर्षासनापैकी दिले २ असफर्या" अशी नोंद आहे. त्याच पुस्तकाच्या पृ. ५२ वर ते म्हणतात, "गुरव हे शाकाहारी असून ते ब्राह्मणाशिवाय दुसऱ्याच्या घरी जेवण घेत नाहीत. ते लहान प्रमाणावर ज्योतिष्याचे काम करून शेताची नांगरणी, पेरणी, मळणी, पीक काढणे यावद्दल मुहूर्त सांगतात. त्याचप्रमाणे अंगावर अवसर (नवती) आणून किंवा तरंग घेऊन रवळनाथ वाड थोरे शंकराच्या (रुद्राच्या) गणांचा आभास उत्पन्न करून निरनिराळ्या प्रकारे भक्तांस आशीर्वाद, प्रसाद, सल्ला देतात. म्हणून त्यांसही इनामे दिली जात असत. हे काम हलक्या प्रकारचे म्हणून समजून ब्राह्मण ते करीत नाहीत. जांबावली (केपे महाल) येथील केळीप नावाचे कुणबी जातीचे लोकही हे काम करतात. हा भार येण्यापूर्वी ब्राह्मणाने दिलेल्या मंत्राक्षता ज्या माणसामध्ये हा अवसर येतो त्याच्यावर सर्व लोकां-

कडून टाकल्या जातात. त्या टाकल्यावर अवसर येण्यास सुरुवात होते."

'भारतीय संस्कृति-कोशात' गुरवांची माहिती देण्यात आलेली आहे ती अशी– "सुसंस्कृत गुरव व ब्राह्मण यात फारसा फरक आढळून येत नाही. श्री शिवगंगा-पीठाच्या शंकराचार्यांनी इ. स. १९१२ साली गुरव हे ब्राह्मणच आहेत, असा आपला अभिप्राय दिला आहे."

इ. स. १९४७ च्या सुमारास सातारा कोर्टात गुरव हे ब्राह्मण आहेत की नाहीत अशा प्रकारचा एक खटला चालला होता. त्यावेळी निरनिराळ्या ठिकाणच्या शास्त्री पंडितांच्या साक्षी काढण्यात आल्या व ते शैवब्राह्मण असल्याचा निवाडा झाला आहे.

गोव्यातील जुन्या कागदपत्रांतून अगर शृंगेरी मठ अगर संकेश्वर मठाकडून त्यांचा ब्राह्मण समाजांतर्गत असा उल्लेख केलेला आढळत नाही. त्यास गुरव म्हणूनच ओळखतात. भट भटजी असा त्यांचा उल्लेख आढळत नाही.

ह्या समाजाची लोकसंख्या आता अत्यल्प झाली आहे. ती तशी कमी का झाली आहे, होत आहे हा समाज-शास्त्रज्ञांनी संशोधन करण्यासारखा विषय आहे.

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Gurav Community in Konkan

Summary

Members of the Gurav community of Konkan reside in the regions of Goa, Savantwadi, Malvan etc, and pursue the occupation of temple ministrants. They form a separate caste and in historical documents they are referred to as Guravs. They are vegetarians and their life-style is generally like that of Brahmans. However, they have no inhibition in taking food at the house of a Saraswat who eats fish. As part of their profession, they worship the devatas like Shivalinga, Bhagawati etc. The village Guravs perform, according to tradition, a variety of semi-religious rites on different occasions during the year. Although broadly similar in nature, the occupational practices of the Guravs differ from village to village.

One finds in the temples of this region an image of a deity called 'Brahmana'. Where there are two such Brahmana

deities in the same temple one is called 'Kashikalyani Brahman' and the other as 'Jain Brahmana'. The deity of Jaina Brahmana is considered by the Guravs to represent their Kulapurush, i. e., originator, or founder of the clan.

It is, therefore, likely that Guravs were originally Jains, or, also, the Hindus, at the decline of the Jaina religion, started using the Jain temples and installed their own deities along with the Jain deities.

A Socio-cultural History of Goa from the Bhojas to the Vijayanagara By Vithal Raghavendra Mitragotri - 1999 page no. 58 Regarding Gurav Their Social status and degradation of bramhinhood

Guravas

Like the above microscopic Brahmin communities of the Padhye Brahmins, the Bhattaprabhu and the Kramavant Joshis,

the Guravās is also a small community. There were Guravās in Pedne, Salcete, Bardez, Tiswadi, Ponda, Sanguem and Canacona[45]. The Guravās occupy the next position to the Brahmins. Among Guravas also the thread ceremony was performed. They used to learn some religious Sanskrit texts. In this respect, they resembled Jiyārs of Tamilnadu.[46] The Gurava family of Mardol had matrimonial relations with Jira family of Uttar Kannada and enjoyed equal social status.[47]

It seems that Guravās have origins in Kālamukhas and the latter were worshippers of Siva.[48] Therefore, the Guravās also took up the worship in Saiva temples. The references to Guravās are found in the inscriptions from the beginning of the 9th century in Kannada speaking regions.[49] In Goa there were Gurav priests in the temples of Chandreshwar - Bhutnath, Mahālsa and Saptakoteshwar. Commonly Guravās were the priests, in the shrines, the grāma-devatās scattered all over of Goa.

It seems that during the initial stage the term Guravā was applied to Saiva Brahmins of priestly order. The Guravā priests were supposed to maintain strict celibacy. In the course of about four centuries, the distinction between the Guravās and the Brahmins priests became marked and this can be seen in the inscriptions.[50] From this it is evident that even non-Brahmins were the priests of Saiva shrines. After the advent of Virasaivism, the worship of sthavar-linga was forbidden and it seems that many Guravā priests abandoned Siva

temples. These temples were taken over by the people from the lower castes.[51]

In addition to the above groups of Guravās, there were different types of Guravās called Hugars (florists mostly found in Karnataka) Konkan Guravās and Jaina Guravās. The latter two types of Guravās were found in Goa.[52] As regards the Jaina Guravās found in Goa and in north Konkan, that they were earlier Jainas. After the decline of Jainism during the 10th and 11th century. they embraced Hinduism and once again started the worship of Hindu deities. In many temples of Goa there are subsidiary deity (parivār devata) called Jaina purusha.[53] After the decline of Jainism it seems Jaina thirthankarās were worshipped by Hindus. In Kothambi of Bicholim the tirthankara image is worshipped as Brahman purusha.[54]

As stated earlier even in the temple of Mahālsa, Gurav was assisting other priests in the worship of the goddess Mahālsa. Gurav was supposed to remove the flowers offered to the deity on the previous day and this was called nirmalya visarjan. After the deity was given ceremonial ablutions, (abhishekha) he dressed the goddess with sāri and put on the ornaments. He brought the offerings (naivedya) of the temple establishment from the funds provided by devasthān mahājans and the devotees of the deity. He performed ārati (offering of lamps). He prayed the deity on behalf of the devotees

(uttering garāne) for the mistakes committed unknowingly in the course of performing rituals. He prayed the goddess to bless the devotees with favours in their pursuits in day to day life. He kept all the ingredients required for the worship, such as flowers, sandal paste, etc. ready and assisted the priest. He offered the naivedya to the deity according to the instructions of the mahājans. He kept the ornaments required for the deity on festive occasions and the daily ornaments in the safe custody. He was available in the temple through out the day. Even at night he was supposed to sleep in the premises of the temple. He gave prasād and tirtha to the devotees who visited the temple. In the month of Mārgashirshya (November-December) Poushya (December-January) he prepared gudyās and flags. He lit oil lamp of the sanctum and put oil as and when required.[55]

Guravas did not dine with Sāraswats. They considered themselves as superior to the latter. However they did not mind in inter-dining with Karhādes and Padhyes. Infact a Padhye family has adopted a boy who is originally a Gurav.[56] Guravas are have still remained as priests in many Ravalnāth and Vetāla temples of Goa

There is no Endogenous division in gurav currently in 2025 The subcaste were formed on"On the basis of Region :- Konkani gurav, Dakshine gurav, Varhade gurav, zhade gurav , kadu gurav

On basis of Priestlyhood doing for other caste i. e they were priest of those community that's why their name puted in front of him for identity that this gurav is priest of which caste eg:-Shaiva Gurav (Nilkanth ,nagari,swambhyu) , Lingayat(hugar, jeer, malgar) , Kunbi gurav, Maratha gurav, Gondhali gurav, vaishya gurav, Jain gurav, Ahir gurav .

As a proof of that, Sujata Patil - 22 March 2018 Magazine Smart Sobati

गावगाडा

चित्र : पुष्कर पाटणकर

गुरव

पूजा बुवाची असल्या पावन्या प्रमाणे गावची पावा झाली आपल्या गावात जोतिबाचं देवस्थान आहे त्याची पूजा गावातील पुरवाकडे असते. गावात सोळकोन पुरवाची वार घरं, त्यामुळे एका एका वर्षासाठी एका एका घराकडे पूजेचा मान जातो. त्याला 'आमच्याकडं पुरवाची आली' असे म्हणतात. ज्यांच्या घरी पुरवाची येते त्यांना वर्षभरासाठी मानाचा पान व ताट देण्यात येतो.

याशिवाय पुरव विवाहप्रसंग, वास्तुशांत, पंढरीच्या आषाढी वारीला इ. ची माहिती गावातील पुरव सांगतात. अशा प्रसंगी घरातली ही पूजांची कामं ही कर्मकांडाचा भाग असल्याने ती पुरोहितांनी करणं अपेक्षित आहे. परंतु प्रत्यक्षात पुरव हाच सर्वांना आढळतो. यामागे काही पौराणिक संदर्भ आहेत. त्यानुसार पुरव हा शंकराचा अवतार मानला जातो. त्यामुळे विवाहाचा पहिला पहिला हा पुरवाचा असतो. शंकराचा अवतार मानले जाणारे खंडोबा, म्हसोबा, बहिरोबा आणि एकनाथ या देवांची पूजाही परंपरेने पुरवाकडेच असते. पुरव म्हणजे शैव ब्राह्मण.

शैव म्हणजे पुरवात आणि ब्राह्मणात फरक असतो. ब्राह्मण यज्ञोपवीत, अग्निहोत्र आदि गोष्टी करतात पुरव समाजात लग्नात यज्ञोपवीत करण्यापुरता हट्ट पाळतात. शिवाय उपासनेनुसार हिंदू जैन आणि लिंगायत असे विभाग केलेले आढळतात. सगळे पुरव प्रातःपुरव समजले जातात. बऱ्याचदा, आडे पुरव आढळतो. तो गावी त्यांच्या वस्तीच्याठिकाणी पडलेली आढळ बऱ्याचदा पडक्या वाड्यात या आढळ करणारे असतात. यासाठी सोन्याकडे जाणारे, मुलांचे अंगे दोन पोटजाती आढळतात. विवाहात पाळण्याच्या रूढी, परंपरा, देवदेवतांमध्ये भिन्नता आढळते. बोलण्यात विशिष्ट शब्द आढळतात. त्यांनी पकडलेल्या व गळ्यात घालायच्या माळेचे मणी, असा विविध बाबतीतला फरक आढळतो.

पुरव हे बऱ्याचदा शिव या ओळीने येणाऱ्या देवतांचा विशेष असा उल्लेख करावा लागत नाही. कारण गोत्र्याच्या ओळीतल्या पुरव आपण पहातोच मोठ्यावीर गावोगावच्या अंगणात असलेल्या देवांना शिवा लावून ठेवलेले आढळतात. पुरवाणे पूजा केल्यानंतर पुरव हे स्वतःच्या पायाचे बोट अंगठ्याने दाबून रक्त काढतात. गावकीच्या मंदिरात देवदेवतांची आरती करणे, मंदिराचे पावित्र्य राखणे ही कामे पुरवांकडेच असतात. तसेच देवांचा विवाह पूजा करणे, मकरध्वज तेलवान करणे, आरती करणे, गणपतीच्या मूर्तीचा अभिषेक करणे, वैशाख्यपूर्ण पूजा करणे यासंबंधीच्या परिसरांची स्वच्छता करणे ही कामेही पुरवच करतो. शिवा पुजणे, गर्दी वाजवणे, पालखी वाजवणे, मुद्रा वाजवणे या कलाही पुरवांना अवगत असतात. मंत्र यांत्रिक किंवा यज्ञकार्यात अशी यांचे पुरव स्वतः वाजवतात. तसेच देवांचा उत्सव किंवा जत्रोत्सव साजरा करताना गावकऱ्यांच्या मदतीने पालखी सोहळा व मिरवणुकीचे आयोजन करणे हे पुरवांचेच काम असते. अशा प्रकारे परिसरातील सर्व लग्नकार्ये पुरवांकडेच असतात. याशिवाय गावात कुणाचेही

Regarding that gurav has no subcaste or endogenous division currently reference is given Caste code list REDS 2006 page no. 7 code no. 2084 for Karnataka and page no. 13 for 3054 and 3055 for Maharashtra only Gurav is mentioned there

state	stateid	Caste	Subcaste	castecode
KARNATAKA	02	GANIGER	GANIGER	02076
KARNATAKA	02	GODALI	GODALI	02077
KARNATAKA	02	GONDAY	GONDAY	02078
KARNATAKA	02	GONDHALI	GONDHALI	02079
KARNATAKA	02	GONDHALI	GOUDALI	02080
KARNATAKA	02	GOWDA	KSHWRIKA	02081
KARNATAKA	02	GOWDA	NAMA	02082
KARNATAKA	02	GOWDA	VOKKALIGA	02083
KARNATAKA	02	GURAV	GURAV	02084
KARNATAKA	02	HALAKKI	HAKKIPEKKI	02085
KARNATAKA	02	HANABAR	HAJABAR	02086
KARNATAKA	02	HANABAR	HANABAR	02087
KARNATAKA	02	HARER	HARAYAL	02088
KARNATAKA	02	HARIJAN	HARIJAN	02089
KARNATAKA	02	HARIJAN	RANGER	02090
KARNATAKA	02	HELAWAR	HELAWAR	02091
KARNATAKA	02	HINDUKRUBI	HALAMATHA	02092
KARNATAKA	02	HINDULINGAYAT	PANCHAMSALI	02093
KARNATAKA	02	HOLAYA	CHALUVADI	02094
KARNATAKA	02	HOLER	HOLER	02095
KARNATAKA	02	HOLEYA	ADIKARNATAKA	02096
KARNATAKA	02	IDIGA	GOWDRU	02097
KARNATAKA	02	IDIGA	NAIK	02098
KARNATAKA	02	IDIGA	NAJAK	02099
KARNATAKA	02	IDIGA	PUJARI	02100
KARNATAKA	02	IDIGA	TALWAR	02101
KARNATAKA	02	IGOLA	IGOLA	02102
KARNATAKA	02	ILIGER	ILIGER	02103
KARNATAKA	02	JAIN	BOGAR	02104
KARNATAKA	02	JAIN	DIGAMBAR	02105
KARNATAKA	02	JAIN	SWETAMBAR	02106
KARNATAKA	02	JANWAKAR	JANWAKAR	02107
KARNATAKA	02	JOGI	BALEGARA	02108
KARNATAKA	02	KABBOU	KABBOU	02109
KARNATAKA	02	KADANPATADAR	KAPAVPAYR	02110
KARNATAKA	02	KALAL	KALAL	02111
KARNATAKA	02	KAMBAR	KAMBAR	02112
KARNATAKA	02	KANABAR	KANABAR	02113
KARNATAKA	02	KASHATY	NAIK	02114
KARNATAKA	02	KIHATAYERA	NAIK	02115
KARNATAKA	02	KISRUBAR	HALAMATHA	02116
KARNATAKA	02	KOLI	KOLI	02117
KARNATAKA	02	KORAMA	KORAMA	02118
KARNATAKA	02	KORAVARU	KPARAU	02119
KARNATAKA	02	KORAWAR	KORAWAR	02120
KARNATAKA	02	KORAWAR	KURAVAR	02121
KARNATAKA	02	KORMA	KORMA	02122
KARNATAKA	02	KRISTAN	KRISTAN	02123
KARNATAKA	02	KSHATRIYA	ARER	02124
KARNATAKA	02	KSHATRIYA	KSHATRIYA	02125
KARNATAKA	02	KSHATRIYA	MARATHA	02126
KARNATAKA	02	KSHATRIYA	NAIK	02127

state	stateid	Caste	Subcaste	castecode
MAHARASHTRA	03	GOND	SATDEVE	03040
MAHARASHTRA	03	GOND	SHAHDEVE	03041
MAHARASHTRA	03	GOND		03042
MAHARASHTRA	03	GOVIND		03043
MAHARASHTRA	03	GOWARI	ADIWASI	03044
MAHARASHTRA	03	GOWARI	BAWNE	03045
MAHARASHTRA	03	GOWARI	BHANARE	03046
MAHARASHTRA	03	GOWARI	DHUDHA	03047
MAHARASHTRA	03	GOWARI	DUDHGONARI	03048
MAHARASHTRA	03	GOWARI	DUDHGOWALI	03049
MAHARASHTRA	03	GOWARI	GADILOHAR	03050
MAHARASHTRA	03	GOWARI	GOWARI	03051
MAHARASHTRA	03	GOWARI	KASU	03052
MAHARASHTRA	03	GOWARI		03053
MAHARASHTRA	03	GURAV	GURAV	03054
MAHARASHTRA	03	GURAV		03055
MAHARASHTRA	03	HANBER		03056
MAHARASHTRA	03	HOLAR		03057
MAHARASHTRA	03	HOLI		03058
MAHARASHTRA	03	JAIN	DIGAMBAR	03059
MAHARASHTRA	03	JAIN	GURJAR	03060
MAHARASHTRA	03	JAIN	SWETAMBAR	03061
MAHARASHTRA	03	JAIN		03062
MAHARASHTRA	03	KAIKADI		03063
MAHARASHTRA	03	KALAR	JAIN	03064
MAHARASHTRA	03	KALAR	JAINKALAR	03065
MAHARASHTRA	03	KALAR	KALAR	03066
MAHARASHTRA	03	KALAR	ZADE	03067
MAHARASHTRA	03	KARVI		03068
MAHARASHTRA	03	KOHALI	BHELIKHAYE	03069
MAHARASHTRA	03	KOLAM		03070
MAHARASHTRA	03	KOLI	MAHADEVKOLI	03071
MAHARASHTRA	03	KOLI	MALHARKOLI	03072
MAHARASHTRA	03	KOLI		03073
MAHARASHTRA	03	KORKU	KORKU	03074
MAHARASHTRA	03	KORKU		03075
MAHARASHTRA	03	KOSHTI	GAREWAL	03076
MAHARASHTRA	03	KOSHTI	KALBA	03077
MAHARASHTRA	03	KOSHTI		03078
MAHARASHTRA	03	KUMBI	KHAIRE	03079
MAHARASHTRA	03	KUMBI	KHEDULE	03080
MAHARASHTRA	03	KUMHAR	KUMBHAR	03081
MAHARASHTRA	03	KUMHAR	RANE	03082
MAHARASHTRA	03	KUMHAR		03083
MAHARASHTRA	03	KUNBI	BAWNE	03084
MAHARASHTRA	03	KUNBI	DOBAILE	03085
MAHARASHTRA	03	KUNBI	GAREWAL	03086
MAHARASHTRA	03	KUNBI	KHAIRE	03087
MAHARASHTRA	03	KUNBI	KHEDULE	03088
MAHARASHTRA	03	KUNBI	MANA	03089
MAHARASHTRA	03	KUNBI	PADIMSHALI	03090
MAHARASHTRA	03	KUNBI	RANE	03091

1877 John Wilson what caste volume 2 regarding Gurav and Tapodhan bramhin are same and have common social status in society. page no. 122

(158.) *The Bhukanigus.*

The *Bhukanigus* are said to be in Kattiawad.

(159.) *The Garodus.*

The *Garodus* are the priests of the Antyaja Hálás, with whom they eat, but don't intermarry. They look like Brâhmans, and speak Gujarâti.

(160.) *The Tapodanus.*

The *Tapodanus* Brâhmans are found on the banks of the Tápti near Surat. Most of them are cultivators; and many of them act as Pujáris of the temples of Shiva, the offerings at which, contrary to general usage, they accept. They have consequently not the respect of the local Brâhmanhood. They are much in the position of the Gaurava Pujáris of the Marâthá Country.

The *Rájgurus*, *Bhóllus*, and *Chárans* will be noticed in connexion with Rájputâná.

Speaking of the Gurjjara Brâhmans in general, my observant friend the Rev. J. Van S. Taylor writes as follows:—"Many of the castes are numerically insignificant. In such there is a tendency to dwindle away. This is the case with the *Nágaras*, and I think also with the *Dadhichas*. Frequent intermarriage, producing physical deterioration, especially when the blood is poisoned by disease, is one cause of this. Another cause is the non-marriage of widows. Widows are at once a loss to the population and their own caste. But Brâhmanis sometimes become feeders to other castes. Many Rajputs, Kolis, Kulumbis, and Musalmans (I know of one case, even of a Bhangi,) get Brâhmanic widows as either their second or secondary wives!"

"From the same cause *Bhávsars* or *Bhávsárs* castes spring up. These are the progeny of mixtures between persons of different Brâhmanical castes. They are strictly out-castes, and sometimes are numerous enough to form a little community among themselves.

Regarding literacy
Rate in Gurav
community in past
Sanskrit scholarship,
Educational
background etc.
Jayant Bapat
research paper 2001
Gurav and their
jatipuranas.

The Jātipurāṇas of the Gurava temple priests of Maharashtra

Jayant Bhalchandra Bapat

Purāṇic scholarship has dealt extensively with the eighteen Mahāpurāṇas and eighteen related subordinate texts known as Upapurāṇas and occasionally with the Sthālapurāṇas. However, as Greg Bailey (1995: 3) argues, a Purāṇic text, in addition to being a literary object, needs to be considered as a cultural object that appears at a certain time to fulfil a need during the historical development of Hindu culture. From a sociocultural perspective, one must add to the list of Purāṇas an important fourth class of literature, the Jātipurāṇas. These were composed to provide a genealogical account connecting caste groups to a mythological ancestor. These accounts typically span several centuries of narrated time, and although they are often of dubious historical merit as a record of the actual rise or development of a caste, they do give some insight into the pressures within Hindu society to justify particular positions within the caste system. This aspect of the sociological significance of the Jātipurāṇas has largely been ignored in the literature, and, as Ludo Rocher aptly points out, 'they are far more important than our present knowledge of them' (1986: 72). Rocher, though, devotes only one paragraph to the Jātipurāṇas in his work on the Purāṇas.

The Jātipurāṇas are composed primarily with a twofold purpose: to establish and render legitimate the claim of a caste group within a regional (or even a pan-Indian) caste hierarchy to a status usually higher than its existing placement; and to detail the exalted, or at times divine, origin of that group.[1] Although called Purāṇas, the Jātipurāṇas do not necessarily contain the *pañcalakṣana* (the 'five topics') that is the defining characteristic of a Purāṇa (Bailey 1995: 3). Even so, they conform to the overall purpose of the Purāṇas in several ways. They teach ethical behavior and are concerned with transgressions and merits, heavenly rewards and (severe) punishments. They are, however, not concerned with the

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word, as are the *darśana*s (systems of theology), or with *rasa* (aesthetic experience), as in *kāvya* (classical poetry).

The Jātipurāṇas also pattern the Purāṇas in their narrative structure. Their prologue is Āgamic in form, in that the narration is 'a revelation either by a god or a *ṛṣi*' for the good of the people at large and that the actual composer is either a *sūta* (bard) or a mortal being who retells the content. The Jātipurāṇas are invariably *ākhyāna*s or *upākhyāna*s, that is, stories which may be told in verse. They often begin with salutations to the gods or *ṛṣi*s (seers) and, in the end, may contain a *māhātmya* glorifying the Purāṇa. They may also be in prose, written as an argument or a dialogue between the principle narrator (*ṛṣi*, *sūta*, or *paṇḍita*) and his audience or between the actual composer and his listeners.

The narrative tendency may also be to divide the story (*kathā*) into *adhyāya*s (chapters) with formulaic beginnings and ends. The aim of the narrative structure is to make the Jātipurāṇa resemble a proper Purāṇa or a work of high religious value so that it may seem authentic, believable, and paramparic (sanctioned by tradition). For this purpose, a Jātipurāṇa may be tied through context, content, and references to an existing Purāṇa. In order to understand why various *jāti*s resorted to producing the Jātipurāṇas, we must examine the forces that propelled them to do so. This is best illuminated in relation to the social mobility of *jāti*s.

*JĀTI*S AND SOCIAL MOBILITY

The attempt to bring the social reality of *jāti*s in line with the ideological notion of their creation from the fourfold *varṇa* system through miscegenation is at least as old as the *Manusmṛti*. Throughout Indian history, the social reality has been characterized by the existence of innumerable closed social groups defined by heredity, the pursuit of a hereditary profession organized through a division of labor, the ritual evaluation of lifestyle and occupation, access or denial of the *jāti* to the Vedas, and so on. Manu utilized the concepts of miscegenation and caste hierarchy (*anuloma* or hypergamy and *pratiloma* or hypogamy) to explain the social diversities of his time. Since then, hypogamy has also been used in social practice to explain the fall of a caste member from a high status. The thousands of resulting *jāti*s and *upajāti*s found *in situ*, from the seventeenth to the twentieth centuries, came to be known as castes and subcastes by the Portuguese and the British. It must be remembered, however, that the line of demarcation between the *jāti*s is always vague and difficult to discern. Bernard Cohn points out that the *jāti*, like the *varṇa*, is 'essentially a

theoretical level of the Indian social system, of itself possessing no social reality' (1968: 24). Caste hierarchy is far from being a rigid institution. Caste has always existed in a state of dynamic equilibrium, allowing individual castes a measure of mobility. However, as M. N. Srinivas correctly notes, 'these were only positional changes and the fundamental structure itself remained intact' (1967: 7).

Positional changes were precipitated by a caste for a variety of reasons. The Weberian equation of the interplay of politics, power, and status may help us to understand the Indian dynamic. For example, Kṣatriyas, the ruling classes, vied with the Brāhmaṇas for higher social, if not ritual, status. Thus, as early as the reign of the Rāṣṭrakūṭas in Maharashtra, the royalty formed a subcaste called Sat Kṣatriyas for themselves among other Kṣatriyas, and they claimed and apparently enjoyed a higher status than the Brāhmaṇas (Altekar 1982: 309). Such a politically determined status competition existed only between the Brāhmaṇas and the ruling Kṣatriyas. Other Kṣatriyas remained below Brāhmaṇas. Upward mobility has been a constant but difficult battle for the last two or three centuries among the Vaiśya and Śūdra *varṇas*. At every opportunity the lower castes would make an effort to raise themselves. One of the methods adopted by caste leaders was to employ a learned and well-respected Brāhmaṇa to research their past and to find justification for the elevation of their position in the caste hierarchy. To authenticate their claim, a powerful and well-to-do caste might go even further: it could commission a Brāhmaṇa to compose a Jātipurāṇa for them. (A Brāhmaṇa could be found to undertake such a task generally for a reward.) Sometimes a king (approached by a caste) would commission Brāhmaṇas to study the caste's claim. He would then give a ruling according to the advice received (Das 1967–68; see also Hutton 1963: 194; Srinivas 1967: 95). There can be no doubt that kings wielded substantial authority in the legitimization of caste status. Citing several examples, L. S. S. O'Malley notes that 'the king issued marriage regulations for castes, he fixed the social rank of different subcastes, he promoted members of one caste to another level and he degraded them to a lower' (1974: 56).

COLONIAL GOVERNMENT AND SOCIAL STATUS IN MAHARASHTRA

The eighteenth century saw the rule of the Peśvās in Maharashtra and the Mughal rule in most other parts of North India. There is evidence to suggest that both the Peśvās and the Muslim rulers maintained control over caste

matters, the latter though indirectly (O'Malley 1974: 59). With the takeover by the British and the consolidation of their legislative power, these functions were inherited by the British rulers. The British were reluctant, especially after the 1857 revolt, to interfere with the socioreligious matters of the Hindu population, but they were often forced to do so. O'Malley noted in 1932 that:

> There is no official control of caste and no state interference with caste customs in British India. The Government follows a policy of non-intervention, for it is a fixed principle that it should not interfere with social laws and personal customs unless there is a general and unequivocal demand for reform on the part of the people themselves. Yet such is the force of the immemorial tradition that the castes expect the British Government to exercise the prerogative of the ancient Hindu kings by prescribing the social status of the caste. At each recurring census, the census authorities are inundated by memorials from different castes petitioning the Government to recognise their claim to a higher rank than they are actually accorded by the Hindu Community at large (1974: 63).

To facilitate administration, to introduce a fair and logical system of justice, and to fulfil their own Orientalist pursuit, the Imperial government in India embarked upon several courses of action. The major initiatives were: to establish a central bureaucratic information-gathering service; to undertake research into the origin, function, and structure of the caste system with a view to simplify the administration of civil law. Having noted that the Hindu civil customary practices were markedly different for different caste groups, the British government embarked upon creating a corpus of knowledge about caste customs; to undertake ethnographic research resulting in the production of caste histories; to generate a Hindu civil law code from scriptures and localize caste tradition enshrined as legal precedents and by legislation; and to introduce a 'Social Preference Scale classification' in the 1901 census that ranked the castes according to their social precedence.

The Imperial government, after 1858, expanded upon some of the measures already begun by the East India Company. The ethnographers employed by the British attempted to simplify and rationalize the complexities of Indian society, and, in so doing, they gave disproportionate importance to the caste-cluster as the basic organizational level of Hindu society. Max Weber notes:

> It is perhaps impossible to determine the rank order of the castes; it is contested and subject to change. An attempt was made in 1901 by the British census to settle this rank order once and for all. It was not repeated; the

> excitement and discontent that resulted was out of all proportion to the intended result. The attempt to classify castes set off a signal for competitive demands by the castes for social rank and the procurement of historical proofs to support their claims. It led to remonstrances and protests of all kinds and called forth a considerable, and partly instructive, literature. Castes of questionable rank sought to exploit the census for stabilising their position and used the census authorities as one census expert put it, 'as a kind of herald's office.' Amazing claims of new rank were made (1958: 47).

Lucy Carroll goes further:

> The ethnological monographs produced by the colonial rulers stimulated similar inquiries by the Indians. The Indian informants went beyond their subsidiary role to compile their own monographs. The Western authorities drew upon these researches by the Indians, who, in turn, drew upon the Western authorities; the result was the production of a highly interrelated series of caste-histories (1978: 237).

Peter van der Veer echoes Carroll's line of thinking:

> The idea that the caste is the basis of the Indian social order and that to be a Hindu is to be a member of a caste became an axiom in the British period. What probably happened during that period was probably a process of caste formation and more rigid systematization due to administrative and ideological pressures from the colonial system which reminds us of the so-called 'secondary tribalization' in Africa (1989: 53).

This course of action, though inadvertently, proved to be a threat to the delicate equilibrium of the caste system. The fact that the British were now engaged in a continuous attempt to describe, define, interpret, and categorize the social complexity of Indian society enhanced caste consciousness among all castes. This was the first time that the details of the castes and subcastes of the population were being reduced to writing and fixed by a central authority. Many caste groups also saw, in this Manu-like attempt at defining caste hierarchy, an opportunity to elevate their own caste in the total system. To achieve this goal, caste *sabhās* (organizations) were rapidly formed, and sometimes they mounted legal challenges in secular courts against their particular placements in the caste structure. The (newly) educated among the middle and low castes also researched mythology and caste histories and wrote about their own group or, again, commissioned a Brāhmaṇa to write Jātipurāṇas to support their claims. The

Jātipurāṇas were by far the best means of mounting a challenge in the colonial period. They were written mostly by Brāhmaṇas in the language of the *śāstras*, which lent authenticity to a claim because both the British and the indigenous population held the Brāhmaṇas in high scholarly esteem. In the early period of the British rule, the Brāhmaṇas were often the only cultural link between the British and the local population.

The challenges to caste status in the form of petitions to authority, supported by Jātipurāṇas, were concerted attempts, though from diverse and often opposing quarters, to recast the balance of the regional caste hierarchy. Many Jātipurāṇas appeared around 1900 in anticipation of the second census to be held a year later.

VEENA DAS ON THE JĀTIPURĀṆAS

In an insightful paper, Veena Das (1967–68) advises a sociological approach to the study of the Jātipurāṇas. She studied two Jātipurāṇas from Gujarat: the *Malla Purāṇa*, written for the present wrestling caste of Jeṭhimallas who claim to be Brāhmaṇas; and the *Kālikā Purāṇa*, through which the coppersmiths seek a Kṣatriya status. She suggests that there is a vested interest in the writing of a Jātipurāṇa. It concerns castes that see a contradiction between their present low status and a claimed high status that they seek to validate. The method of validation is through myth but must be supported by further proof. For this, the present style of life must be reinterpreted, and if necessary modified, to accord with that which is commensurate with high status. To do this, some existing practices may be highlighted while others are ignored or suppressed. Das points to a mythography that employs archaism, the Sanskrit language, and some stylistic links with the Mahāpurāṇas. The Jātipurāṇas, she continues, are written because the caste hierarchy is dynamic, and they show that appeals can be made to the political power for change. Lastly, she takes issue with the anthropologist, Bronislaw Malinowski, who sees myth simply as a charter that validates the existence of the groups (a tribe, clan, lineage). It may also explain the existence of practices peculiar to such a group. Das argues that all myths are contentious in that they are not accepted especially by those who have a vested interest in status claims. She argues more generally that myths exist in the context of social contentions rather than have an independent existence.

Das argues for three salient points: (*i*) the Jātipurāṇas came about in the context of a contentious claim for high status; (*ii*) a myth can be used as

argument in an oblique attempt to associate with the past; and (*iii*) a myth is a charter for some and a contention for others. Das' analysis is largely directed toward the general purpose and the overall mythography of a Jātipurāṇa. While these points serve as useful generalizations about the Jātipurāṇas and the myths contained in them, they serve as no guide for further analysis. In her desire to elucidate the function and structure of a Jātipurāṇa, Das ignores microhistory, that is, specific histories (events, actions, thoughts, and justifactory arguments) by particular castes and their Jātipurāṇas. An account of the Jātipurāṇa of the coppersmiths of Pandharpur in Maharashtra, who call themselves Ārya Kṣatriyas (noble warriors), will illustrate this point.[2]

THE JĀTIPURĀṆAS OF THE COPPERSMITHS OF PANDHARPUR

The Ārya Kṣatriyas, the coppersmiths, in the holy city of Pandharpur possessed customary rights to visit the famous shrine of Viṭṭhala and, like all high castes, worshipped the god from the *maṇḍapa* (covered anterior space outside the inner sanctum), but they were otherwise regarded as Śūdras in the *varṇa* system. However, in 1857, a claim circulated anonymously that they were in fact low-caste Jiṅgars (horse saddlemakers), whereupon the shrine management committee promptly excluded them from entering the *maṇḍapa*. The status of Jiṅgars in Marathi society was so low that the committee could do little else, forcing the coppersmith leaders to act. They took their case to the Śaṅkarācārya of the Śṛṅgeri *maṭha*, claiming that they were Ārya Kṣatriyas, and they included the following statement in their defense:

> A mighty and powerful demon called Jñānumaṇḍala was notorious and feared in all the three worlds (*triloka*). He hated the gods because he knew it was they who had brought misery and defeat to his forebears. He, therefore, practiced severe austerities (*tapas*) for a very long time and obtained a boon from Brahmā that made him invincible. He then set out to conquer the three worlds and threatened to kill the *ṛṣi*s and the gods. The frightened *ṛṣi*s initially went to Brahmā and then to Viṣṇu for help. However, as they were unable to help them, the *ṛṣi*s together with the two gods went to Śiva. Upon hearing of the havoc produced by Jñānumaṇḍala, Śiva was enraged. A drop of his perspiration gave rise to a son called Muktadeva, the liberated god. Upon Śiva's orders, Muktadeva fought a ferocious battle with Jñānumaṇḍala, destroyed his entire army, and killed him as well.

Pleased with his outstanding valor, Śiva bestowed upon Muktadeva a large kingdom on earth. Muktadeva married Prabhāvatī, daughter of the sage Durvāsa. The couple had eight sons: Jyoti, Bahunāma, Citravarṇa, Vicakṣaṇa, Rukmavarṇa, Rukmamāla, Rukmāṅgada, and Rukmabhūṣaṇa. Muktadeva married his eight sons to the daughters of the eight *ṛṣis*, gave them his kingdom, and retired to the forest with his wife to perform austerities.

Once, on a hunt into the forest, the eight princes came across a half-naked meditating sage named Lomaharṣa. The young princes made fun of him and threw sand and dirt at him. Enraged, the great sage cursed them and said they would lose their kingdom and their right to Vedic rituals forthwith. The frightened and repentant princes apologized and asked for redress. Sage Nārada conveyed this episode to Muktadeva, who then worshipped Śiva on behalf of his sons. Pleased with his austerity and remorse, Śiva appeared before Muktadeva and told him that while he would not undo Lomaharṣa's curse, his sons would be able to observe all non-Vedic rituals, and, with his blessing, they would be known henceforth as Ārya Kṣatriyas. Their progeny would become gifted artisans, such as painters, goldsmiths, sculptors, potters, metal craftsmen, and so on. Śiva also assigned them eight *gotra* (descent) identities: Bhāradvāja, Vāsiṣṭha, Gautama, Aṅgirasa, Kaṇva, Gārgya, Jābāli, and Kauṇḍinya.[3]

The myth thus adequately explains why, in spite of their Kṣatriya caste, the Ārya Kṣatriyas practice non-Kṣatriya professions, and it also explains their claim of royal descent. The Śaṅkarācārya of Śṛṅgeri accepted this version of the birth of the Ārya Kṣatriya caste, issued them a charter to this effect, and asked the trustees of the Viṭṭhala temple to allow them free access as before. (It appears that the trustees accepted this ruling.)

This story serves not so much to refute Veena Das as to refine what would be missed if one relied solely on her general outline of the Jātipurāṇas to explain their significance:

(*i*) The problem in this case was not a bid by the coppersmiths for the raising of their status, but an anonymous rumor that sought to downgrade them from their existing status. The rumor in this case was an effective means to attempt to lower another caste's position. More generally, rumors generated and circulated by contending individuals or castes are meant to arrest a caste's claim to higher status.

(*ii*) The ostensible contenders were the management committee of the temple who themselves were forced into a hostile decision, even if only to safeguard the sanctity of the temple. It was the contenders who raised the issue. Only then the

smiths claimed a previously high status.

(*iii*) The authentication of the new status did not depend on differentiation of the present style of life and that appropriate to the claimed status. The smiths continued their occupations without distinguishing what was essential or appropriate for the new status. The validation process did not depend on association, narrative style, archaism, and so on, but simply on a story that was a plausible myth. Validation was achieved by claiming birth from Śiva and possession of a *gotra* identity. The birth of the ancestor was for a culturally desirable reason, namely, the destruction of an evildoer. A tripartite structure of high status, transgression and fall, and rehabilitation was involved. In this case, status rehabilitation was accompanied by a boon.

(*iv*) The decision-making authority was not political but religious in character. Authority was derived both from personal prestige and office, his learning, and the acceptance of an unusual role by a *saṃnyāsin*. This role for the Śaṅkarācārya came about in the context of the British but was not dependent on them. In fact it formed an alternative authority. The original dispute occurred not in the context of the new colonial power taking over or the census but, if at all, in the context of the Peśvās who were keen on preserving the primacy of the Brāhmaṇas. The Brāhmaṇa Peśvās who were culturally, politically, and socially dominant held to the theory that in Maharashtra there were only two *varṇas* in the Kali Yuga, namely, the Brāhmaṇas and the Śūdras. They enforced this division ruthlessly with the state power at their hand. They were especially wary of any claim to Kṣatriyahood by any caste which may presumably challenge their right to rule at anytime in future. (In passing, it may be noted that they had successfully excluded the Marāṭhā dynasty from Kṣatriyahood so much so that even now, Rājpūt royal lineages do not accept the Marāṭhās amongst their fold.)

(*v*) While it is not clear-cut, it may be argued that the publication in 1900 of the events that occurred in 1857 may have been related to the coming census of 1901. If so, the appeal to all smiths to use the Jātipurāṇas can be read as a revolt against Brāhmaṇa primacy.

(*vi*) Pandharpur is an all-India temple site, and the majority of devotees are low caste. The Brāhmaṇa committee would, therefore, have less concern with who worshipped the deity from the *maṇḍapa*.

(*vii*) The printed text was in Marathi prose, that is, for the consumption of a socially changing non-Brāhmaṇa/artisan population.

To summarize: cultural analysis in terms of narrative, content, and linguistic structures is helpful and does yield greater understanding, but it must be considered in conjunction with a general sociological inquiry.

THE STRUCTURE OF THE JĀTIPURĀṆAS

All Jātipurāṇas invariably contain common structural elements in their narrative style. A Jātipurāṇa describes the fall by a caste's distant forebears or indicates the performance of any other behavior which deviated substantially from the norm to which the caste aspires. The incurring of the wrath of the gods or the *ṛṣis* results in a curse which downgrades the offending caste to a lower, mostly Śūdra, *varṇa*. Finally, a Jātipurāṇa describes the expiation of the sin and/or rehabilitation of the caste at a level lower than the original but higher than its erstwhile status.

The employment of these structuring devices in Jātipurāṇas enabled many a caste to lay claim to an originally high, but now lost, status. Although immediate success was not always achieved, these devices often enabled the caste to keep its claim viable so that it might be reactivated at a later date. Since colonial times, this manner of a claim might in itself be a mark of both modernity and education and thus denotes a social status higher than that of other castes who have as yet not made such a claim. While many of the stories or rather the myths incorporated in these claims are fanciful and without significance, it appears that some castes have had a *prima facie* justification for claiming a high status in the distant past. While the census or the courts provide the opportunity for it, establishing such a claim is not easy. The caste first needs to prove, through arguments and evidence, their right to the claimed status. They must also demonstrate that their practices concerning marriage, dowry, widow remarriage, bigamy, purity and pollution, commensality, occupation are commensurate with the status they claim. Finally, the caste needs enough wealth and political power at the local/regional level to convince others to accept their claim. Even after adjudication in court, it often takes a caste a long time to succeed in acquiring the new status.

THE GURAVA JĀTIPURĀṆAS

I will now explore five Jātipurāṇas composed by or on behalf of the Śaiva Brāhmaṇa or Śaiva Gurava caste. I will first examine the background of these Jātipurāṇas so as to be able to put forward a hypothesis about the social forces that propelled the Guravas to commission these works. Second, I will analyze them in terms of their structure and cultural contents in order to discern the logic[4] employed by the authors in an attempt to achieve their goal. Why, among

the Guravas, is it only the Śaiva Guravas who have laid a claim to Brāhmaṇa-hood? Four of these Gurava Jātipurāṇas reveal a narrative structure which is centered on a retelling of, or reference to, the Sudarśana myth as found in the forty-fourth *adhyāya* of the *Jñāna Saṃhitā* of the *Śiva Purāṇa*.

The first Jātipurāṇa, the *Devalaka Kathāmṛta*, was published in 1905; the second, the *Sthūla Śaivāgama*, in 1909; the third, the *Laghu Śaivāgama*, in 1907; the fourth, *Gaurava*, in 1981; and the fifth, *Guruvarya Gurava Kathāmṛta* or *Śivamahimecī Nandāvratakathā*, in 1992. The year of the publication of the first three Jātipurāṇas is significant. Long before 1905, when the first Jātipurāṇa appeared, the Śaiva Guravas' claim to Brāhmaṇic status was already confirmed by a religious authority, the Śaṅkarācārya, in 1811 and in the courts in 1911 and later in 1938. Thus the Śaiva Guravas needed not to prove but required official evidence of their Brāhmaṇic practices. By 1900, and perhaps before, there were enough Guravas in occupations other than the one prescribed for their caste by tradition to make their caste claim, vis-à-vis other Brāhmaṇas, incidental. With the Jātipurāṇas in print, at least some of the Guravas were (and still are) making a claim to a status compatible with other elite castes.

THE *DEVALAKA KATHĀMṚTA*

The *Devalaka Kathāmṛta* is written in Marathi verse. The text, printed in palmleaf manuscript format, measures thirteen by nine centimeters and contains five chapters in forty-three pages. It was published at the Jagadhitecchu Press in Pune. The title page indicates that 'It was written by Balshastri Upasani, a Brāhmaṇa well versed in the Vedas and *śāstra*s, according to the wishes of the late Martand Ramji Gurava Punekar and published by his son Nagesh Martand Gurava.' The next page offers an invitation to all Guravas to advertise and sell the book to their Gurava brethren. It also expresses the publishers' desire to print information about Gurava daily rituals (*nityavidhi*) and encourages the submission of all such information. This invitation is dated July 25, 1905. Its purpose was to obtain more proof of the Guravas' Brāhmaṇic identity because any evidence of the performance of daily rituals identical to those practiced by the Brāhmaṇas would add weight to their claim to Brāhmaṇahood. There is no evidence of published work prescribing daily rituals (*āhnikavidhi*) specifically for the Guravas. There was little danger that the details supplied by readers would not be Brāhmaṇic in conception. Brāhmaṇa practices themselves vary depending on the Gṛhyasūtra followed, and therefore any specific practice of the

Guravas could be explained as simply another variation.

The narrative structure of the *Devalaka Kathāmṛta* resembles that of a Purāṇa. In the traditional evocative style, Balshastri Upasani devotes the first few pages of the first chapter to an invocation to Gaṇeśa, the auspicious god. He also invokes Sarasvatī, the goddess of knowledge, Vyāsa, and Vālmīki, the non-Brāhmaṇa author of the *Rāmāyaṇa*. He then asserts that these three appeared before him and blessed his work. Through association and imitation of the Purāṇas, he offers the first proof of the authenticity of the contents of the Jātipurāṇa. On page six, Upasani recalls the idyllic Purāṇic scene, depicting Vyāsa and other sages engaged in discourse in the Naimiṣa Forest. The sages plead with Vyāsa to expound the greatness of a deity or to solve a difficult theological problem. Thus, the gathered devotees call Upasani their own *sūta*, or the narrator, and beg him to recount tales of the greatness of Śiva. They then pose a problem for him:

> When we visit a Śiva temple, we always see a perverse (*viparīta*) practice there. The first *pūjā* is always performed by a Gurava, and Śiva and Gaurī accept this *pūjā*. Can you, therefore, explain the reasons behind this mystery and also the genesis of the Guravas? (6).

Upasani replies that the great sage Vyāsa himself explained the origin of the Guravas in the *Śiva Purāṇa*. He adds that the person described by Vyāsa as a Devalaka in Sanskrit is none other than the present-day Gurava. *Adhyāya* one ends thus:

> Those who are called Devalakas in the Gīrvaṇa [Sanskrit] language are truly the Guravas. Let everyone hear their story in this *adhyāya*. I offer it to Sāmbasadāśiva [Śiva with Ambā (Pārvatī)]. Here ends the first *adhyāya* in the *Devalaka Kathāmṛta* (8).

Upasani begins the second *adhyāya* by reiterating that he had told the audience about the original name of the Guravas (that is, the Devalakas) in the first *adhyāya*. The tableau hinted at in the first *adhyāya* is recreated here with a formulaic description of 'the Naimiṣa Forest,' an idyllic place 'replete with fruit-laden trees and countless shrubs with fragrant flowers.' We are told that even the famous Malaya Mountain is jealous of this forest. Upasani calls the forest home to Tapodhanas,[5] those *ṛṣi*s wealthy in *tapas*, who practice every day. Thick smoke rising from the sacrificial fires of the *ṛṣi*s has blackened the leaves of some of the trees. The *ṛṣi*s sit together with their disciples in the afternoon, some discussing *śāstra*s and Nyāya, others giving lessons in grammar and

music. The *sūta* enters the scene, and the *ṛṣi*s and the Brāhmaṇas, 'overwhelmed with joy,' ask him to narrate the story of the Devalakas. He replies that 'the Devalaka story is sacred, and the audience should listen to it carefully.' He then narrates the story:

> Dadhici was a great Brāhmaṇa who was wealthy with great ascetic heat. He knew all the four Vedas, the six *śāstra*s, and the eighteen Purāṇas. Dadhici was a great devotee of Śiva and worshipped the god day and night. He also performed daily Brāhmaṇic rituals and sacrifices. Dadhici had a son called Sudarśana whose wife was called Duṣkulā[6] because she was born in a sinful family.
>
> Once Dadhici was invited to a Brāhmaṇa council meeting in another town. He assigned the task of Śiva's *pūjā* to his son Sudarśana and went away (19–20).

The second *adhyāya* ends with the same formula as the first. *Adhyāya* three continues with our story:

> While Dadhici was away, Sudarśana continued performing Śiva's *pūjā* at home. Then came Śivarātri. Everyone therefore fasted during the day, and so did Sudarśana. However, because he was in Duṣkulā's company, his mind was polluted because of her evil influence and he was not scared of committing a sin.[7] He performed the *pūjā* of Śiva on this auspicious day and went home. However, instead of continuing his fast as required by the Śivarātri *vrata*, he dined with his wife at night and then had intercourse with her. Next morning, he got up in a hurry and went to the temple without taking a bath. The sinner entered the temple sanctum and worshipped Śiva in that impure state. Śiva was infuriated and appeared before Sudarśana in his terrible form with five heads and ten hands, all holding shining weapons. The fire of the destruction of the world poured out of his eyes. He kicked Sudarśana and told him that there was no sinner greater than him. The god said that Sudarśana had committed three unpardonable sins: consuming food on a sacred day instead of fasting, engaging in intercourse on such a day, and performing the god's *pūjā* without first taking the purificatory bath. For these sins, Śiva cursed Sudarśana to become lifeless. Having uttered this terrible curse, Śiva disappeared. At that very instant, Sudarśana fainted and Duṣkulā died from grief.
>
> Sudarśana returned to earth[8] and was grief-stricken by his wife's death. He cursed himself that he was the one who was responsible for all the terrible happenings and that he was paying for his sins in his previous birth. He said,

'As it was, he was fallen, and now he was a widower. No one in the world would care for him now.' He then took her body to the cremation ground and got his sons to do the last rites for her (26–27).

The third *adhyāya* ends the same way as the first two with the formulaic statement used in the two proceeding chapters. In the fourth *adhyāya*, the story continues:

Having heard the terrible news, Dadhici returned home in a hurry and blamed Sudarśana for inviting the wrath of Śiva. He then invoked both Śiva and his consort Bhavānī. He pleaded with them and said that Sudarśana was like a son to them and that they should therefore forgive him. He then asked Sudarśana to worship Bhavānī. Pleased with Sudarśana's austerities and sincerity, Pārvatī appeared before them and pleaded with Śiva repeatedly on their behalf. Pleased with this, Śiva appeared before Sudarśana and made him sit next to him. Śiva bathed him with *ghī* and gave him the sacred thread with three strands. He asked Sudarśana to recite the sacred Śivagāyatrī-*mantra*, *oṃ namaḥ śivāya*,[9] and worship Gaurī. Śiva then dictated the mode of the *ṣoḍaśapacāra-pūjā* for himself.[10] He said to Sudarśana: 'You will be the highest among my devotees and will precede all others at every *pūjā*. Items, such as grains, flowers, clothing, and *ghī*, that my devotees bring for my *pūjā* will be yours, so also any precious stones or other wealth. You will make a living out of these. My *pūjā* will not be complete unless you say words to that effect. At any feeding of the Brāhmaṇas, at least one Gurava[11] must be included, otherwise the feast will not accrue any merit. Take this as the truth, my *baṭu*.'[12]

Śiva also decreed, 'Sudarśana must not recite *mantra*s from the Vedas, and he should respect Brāhmaṇas and eat only vegetarian food' (27).

Śiva then explained the *dharma* (of the Devalakas) to Sudarśana. This consisted of a daily ritual bath in a sacred river, rigorous performance of the rituals, putting a round sandalwood mark (*tilaka*) on the forehead,[13] and performance of the Śivasandhyā.

The ban on reciting the Vedic *mantra*s was extended to Sudarśana's progeny as well. Śiva said that although the progeny of Sudarśana had lost their Vedic rites, they should worship him constantly, and that he was giving them the special name of Devalaka. The god said that no one ought to perform his *pūjā* before a Devalaka does it. He decreed that a Devalaka must be respected, whether he be pure or sinful. Those who fed Brāhmaṇas in order to please Śiva or Pārvatī ought to include at least one Devalaka among the invitees. If the

Devalaka was satiated by the meal, then Śiva himself would be equally happy. Here ends the fourth *adhyāya*.

The fifth and final *adhyāya* is essentially a *māhātmya* of the Devalakas wherein the story of the great king Bhadrasen is told and affirms the new status of the Devalakas:

> Bhadrasen conquered the whole world. He remained, however, extremely kind to all his people, and he was also a great devotee of Śiva. Pleased with his singular devotion, Śiva appeared before him and offered him whatever he wanted, including Indra's throne. Bhadrasen refused to ask for any material reward. However, he asked Śiva to grant him some means to show whether he had fulfilled his daily rituals and duties toward Śiva. Śiva gave Bhadrasen a special pennant and asked him to raise it every morning. If Bhadrasen performed his daily duties properly, then the pennant would fall to the ground. However, in spite of all his good deeds, including feeding thousands of Brāhmaṇas daily, the pennant remained upright. The saddened king did not know what to do. One day a Devalaka visited the king and was fed along with the Brāhmaṇas. The pennant fell to the ground instantly. The Brāhmaṇas then explained to the king that the pennant fell due to the very special meritorious deed of feeding a Devalaka. They also explained that feeding even a crore [ten million] of Brāhmaṇas was not much good unless a Devalaka was fed as well. The right to his first *pūjā* of the day was given by Śiva himself to the Devalakas. After that, Bhadrasen made sure a Devalaka was properly fed and clothed every day (40).

At the end of the chapter and the Purāṇa, Upasani says that this account of the Devalakas was narrated by the *sūta* to Śaunaka and other *ṛṣi*s and that he, Upasani, now tells it to the gathered devotees. He says: 'Just as Śiva and Śaṅkara are two names for the same god, Ghaṭa and Ghāgara (a Marathi word) are the two names for the same pot, Śarkarā and Sākhar (a Marathi word) are the two names for the same sugar, similarly Devalaka and Gurava are the two names for the same person.' Upasani finally declares that those Guravas who read this Purāṇa every day[14] will be looked after by Śiva and will acquire a good family, wealth, and happiness.

Main features of the Devalaka Kathāmṛta

The main features that identify the *Devalaka Kathāmṛta* with a Purāṇa also serves as its *raison d'être*, namely, the desire to prove the Brāhmaṇic status of the Guravas. The text is divided into *adhyāya*s, the first establishes the identity

of the narrator, Upasani, and his audience. *Adhyāya*s two to four tell the main story of the transformation of the Brāhmaṇa Sudarśana into a Devalaka. Finally, *adhyāya* five narrates a story of King Bhadrasen who ignores the primacy of the Devalakas in Śiva's *pūjā*. He is punished by Śiva who withholds approval until he rights the wrong. The final *māhātmya* is typical of the Purāṇas and contains instruction about worship rituals. It constitutes an illustration that reinforces the main story. The division of the narrative into *adhyāya*s is a Purāṇic practice. The close of each chapter utilizes a Purāṇic device to link the Devalakas of the past with the present-day Guravas.

The text was composed in the Marathi, not in the Sanskrit, language. This might have been due to a reluctance on the part of the Brāhmaṇa narrator to use Sanskrit in a text that, however slightly, accords primacy to the Guravas over the Brāhmaṇas. The choice of Marathi might also indicate that the writer was simply documenting a Marathi practice and the myth that accompanied it. Whatever the rationale of the author, use of Marathi certainly made the text more accessible to the Guravas, most of whom did not (and do not) know Sanskrit. It is possible that the Gurava patron who published the text requested that it be written in Marathi.

Divergence between Devalaka Kathāmṛta *and* adhyāya *44 of the* Jñāna Saṃhitā *of the* Śiva Purāṇa

Conversations with Gurava elders revealed that they believed that their origin is described in the forty-fourth *adhyāya* of the *Jñāna Saṃhitā* of the *Śiva Purāṇa* and that they hold that they are the descendants of Sudarśana, the Devalaka of the *Śiva Purāṇa* myth. They relayed that many Guravas use Devalaka as a surname. The myth, as it unfolds in *Jñāna Saṃhitā* 44, is essentially the same as that reproduced in the *Devalaka Kathāmṛta*, although there are noteworthy differences.

The *sūta*[15] category of narrators of Purāṇic myth are no longer extant in Maharashtra. Their function is taken over by Brāhmaṇas. Upasani, the narrator of the *Devalaka Kathāmṛta*, is a Brāhmaṇa. The *Jñāna Saṃhitā* starts with a warning to the Brāhmaṇas about becoming Devalakas. Contrarily, in the *Devalaka Kathāmṛta*, the audience is aware of the perverse practice (*viparīta*) of a Gurava preceding a Brāhmaṇa in the *pūjā*. Because *Jñāna Saṃhitā* 44 is embedded in a larger text, it does not evoke a recreation of the Naimiṣa location as *Devalaka Kathāmṛta* does. In addition, and unlike the *Jñāna Saṃhitā*, the *Devalaka Kathāmṛta* account tells us that Dadhici has gone away to another town to solve a community dispute. To a Marathi audience, this information would convey that Dadhici was indeed a 'wise man.'

The *Devalaka Kathāmṛta* is notably more critical of Sudarśana's wife Duṣkulā and of women in general. In this text, it seems that all women are polluted and 'simply associating with them leads to frightful consequences.' Association with women is like 'drinking poison or inviting Yama'; it signals one's demise. Upasani's contempt for women and his tirade against them is not atypical in Indian literature. In Maharashtra and elsewhere, women were seen as inhibiting *bhakti* or other modes of salvation. In the *Devalaka Kathāmṛta*, we are told that Sudarśana's wife is Duṣkulā (one from an evil lineage) as opposed to Duṣkalpā (one who is incompetent) as in *Jñāna Saṃhitā*. Further, 'Duṣkulā' implies a genealogical handicap that is irreversible, while 'Duṣkalpā' suggests a personal, regrettable and hence a lesser family.

In general, the *Devalaka Kathāmṛta* is less restrained in depicting the emotions of its characters. The text describes Śiva's anger in frightening detail. It also describes Sudarśana's grief as he cremates Duṣkulā after her death, and his sons perform the last rites for her. The *Devalaka Kathāmṛta* is a *kāvya* interested in pathos (*karuṇa rasa*) much more so than a typical Purāṇa, and the inclusion of elaborate emotional appeals suggests that it was as much for public recitation as for private reading.

Most importantly, in the *Devalaka Kathāmṛta*, it is Śiva who adopts Sudarśana as the *baṭu*, not Girijā as in *Jñāna Saṃhitā* 44. One can only speculate as to why Upasani would make this change, as he would no doubt have read the *Jñāna Saṃhitā*. Perhaps Upasani would have liked a charter that positively affirmed their Brāhmaṇa status. To repeat, Upasani is unwilling to grant it to them explicitly.

There are several indications that Upasani wrote for the Gurava patrons. Unlike in the *Jñāna Saṃhitā*, Upasani makes a direct identification between the Devalakas and the Guravas. Śiva gives the name Devalaka to Sudarśana's lineage, and at the end of each *adhyāya*, Upasani makes it clear to his audience that those who are called Devalakas are 'without doubt the Guravas.' However, Upasani is a Brāhmaṇa and, as such, cannot and will not raise the Guravas into Brāhmaṇas; as in *Jñāna Saṃhitā*, he also puts a ban on the Guravas reciting the Veda.

The *Devalaka Kathāmṛta* provides a full *phalaśruti*, the reward for listening to and reciting the text. Upasani enjoins everyone, especially the Guravas, to listen and obtain rewards. He then outlines the modes of worship to be performed by the Guravas every Monday, a worship he promises will remove all obstacles. Yet the *Jñāna Saṃhitā*'s *phalaśruti*, contrary to normal practice, is in the *māhātmya* and is addressed to all and sundry. It only enjoins them to feed the Devalaka beforehand at a ritual meal. The import of this is clear. While the *Devalaka Kathāmṛta* is essentially directed toward the Guravas, the *Jñāna Saṃhitā* is aimed at a wider audience. The readers of the *Jñāna Saṃhitā* are

meant to see the story of the Devalakas as one amongst numerous stories that constitute the *Jñāna Saṃhitā* and, indeed, the *Śiva Purāṇa*. Hence the reward promised in the *phalaśruti* by the *Jñāna Saṃhitā* is only a minor and casual part of the reward promised by the reading of the whole of the *Śiva Purāṇa*.

Narrative structure of the Devalaka Kathāmṛta

Finally, like the *Jñāna Saṃhitā*, the *Devalaka Kathāmṛta* is also structured as a rite of passage (van Gennep 1960: 18, 105–6, 191). In the second *adhyāya*, we are informed of the initial status of Sudarśana. There he is the son of the Brāhmaṇa Dadhici. In the third *adhyāya*, Sudarśana dies because of his transgression. In other words, he enters liminality (absence of status). In the fourth *adhyāya*, through the ritual of worship by his father and the intervention of Pārvatī and Śiva, he gains a new status. Here it is Śiva who takes him in his lap. In the fifth *adhyāya*, the new status is confirmed by the king's act and broadcast to the people at large.[16] Unlike *Jñāna Saṃhitā* 44, a notable feature of the *Devalaka Kathāmṛta* is that it does not describe Sudarśana's sin as threefold. The *Jñāna Saṃhitā* is obviously 'structural' par excellence in that it is aware of tripartism embodied in Hindu modes of thought. The *Devalaka Kathāmṛta*, a text meant presumably for a less learned by highly devoted and involved leadership, likely did not need themes which are erudite but only confusing to the audience. Alternatively, one can argue that the theme of 'triple burden of sins,' if brought into the *Devalaka Kathāmṛta*, would have made the reversal/salvation of Sudarśana (and his progeny, the Guravas) more problematic, difficult to credit, and so on.

THE *LAGHU ŚAIVĀGAMA*

The *Laghu Śaivāgama* is divided into three chapters, comprising approximately sixty pages.[17] The printed text measures thirteen by twenty-two centimeters. The colophon after the last chapter gives us some information about the author and the Purāṇa itself:

> The Purāṇa was composed by Sitaram Dajiba Pande[18] who calls himself a Śaivadvija[19] and who was the *pujārī* of the Jāgṛteśvara Devasthāna in Nagpur. It was published by Motivilas Press in Nagpur in 1907.

The *Laghu Śaivāgama* essentially forwards an argument to prove that the

Guravas are Brāhmaṇas. It also uses the Sudarśana myth to claim Brāhmaṇa-hood.

Chapter one is eighteen pages and begins by paying homage to Śiva. It then develops long-winded explanations as to why the Guravas should be recognized as Brāhmaṇas. It argues that even in the highest and most coveted Brāhmaṇa *varṇa*, there are distinctions such as Pañcagauḍa and Pañcadraviḍa. Among these main divisions, there are many *kula*s (lineages) that are considered higher or lower depending on the duties allotted to them by tradition (*paramparā*). Among the various Brāhmaṇa castes are the Devalaka Brāhmaṇas known in Marathi as the Guravas. Pande stresses that these Devalaka Brāhmaṇas are known in Sanskrit as *devalaka vipra*s. As the author has an adequate knowledge of Sanskrit, his use of the term '*vipra*' (learned) seems deliberate. The use of that particular term implies that the Devalakas were, indeed, learned Brāhmaṇas. He adds that other Brāhmaṇas, not just the Devalakas, are forbidden from adopting temple worship as a profession.

To support his claim, Pande quotes *Jñāna Saṃhitā*:

> The man who acts beneficially for the continuity of the world should worship the god Śiva. But he should not propitiate Śiva with a desire for the wealth of others. The Brāhmaṇa who does this for six months is certainly called a Devalaka. Since he is called a Devalaka, he now definitely becomes one (1).

Pande acknowledges that the Guravas who call themselves Devalaka Brāhmaṇas are looked down upon by other Brāhmaṇas because they live upon the offerings made to Śiva by other devotees. He sees a derogatory slant in these *śloka*s and considers the refutation of it as a major task.

Pande's bold case begins by arguing that the Devalaka Brāhmaṇas have acquired many boons due to the austerities they have performed, and they are therefore the greatest among Brāhmaṇas! Unless one is born into their *kula*, he says, it is impossible to equal them. This statement elevates the Devalakas above other Brāhmaṇas. As he tells it, the only shortcoming the Devalakas have is that they do not have the right to recite the Brahmagāyatrī-*mantra*. This privilege was taken away by Śiva because of a transgression their forebear committed. However, Śiva later pardoned him and taught him the Śivagāyatrī-*mantra*, which Pande calls the 'very Vedic mother' of the Brahmagāyatrī-*mantra*. Pande stresses that only the Devalakas are allowed to accept money (*dakṣiṇā*) for performing Śiva's *pūjā*, whereas other Brāhmaṇas may perform Śiva's *pūjā* without accepting a *dakṣiṇā*. As the term '*dakṣiṇā*' refers to the gift given to a Brāhmaṇa for specific services and not a stipend, Pande argues that the use of the term implies Brāhmaṇa status for the Devalakas.

In the *Laghu Śaivāgama*, Pande scathingly attacks the Marathi Brāhmaṇas whom he calls 'the greatest enemies of the Guravas.' He claims that the selfish Marathi Brāhmaṇas have stolen the right of the Devalaka Brāhmaṇas to perform Śiva-*pūjā* in the Kali Yuga. Due to this selfish action, Pande says, they have themselves lost their right to Vedic rituals. He reiterates that the acceptance of *dakṣiṇā* in the Śiva temple is the sole right of the Devalaka Brāhmaṇa and drives home the point that there is a big difference between a Devalaka who can do this and the mean and selfish Brāhmaṇa who performs the *pūjā* for monetary gains only because he does not possess this divine right.

To support his arguments, Pande again quotes the *Jñāna Saṃhitā*:

> [In the temple, Śiva's] *pūjā* performed as laid down in the past must be performed only by a *baṭuka*. If, however, it is performed by oneself at one's own home, there is no rule [as to who should perform it] (7).

Pande argues that while the question of the lower status of the Devalakas is raised only because of his inability to recite Vedic *mantra*s, his membership in the Brāhmaṇa *varṇa* is an established fact. Finally, Pande declares what seems to him the ultimate proof of the Devalaka's Brāhmaṇahood. He argues that Dadhici is the son of Brahmā, and so he must be a Brāhmaṇa. As the Devalakas are born in Dadhici's *kula*, he states, not even Vyāsa could say that the Devalakas are not Brāhmaṇas.

The great differences in status among Maharashtrian Brāhmaṇas show that in spite of being 'proven' as Brāhmaṇas, they are still not rated equally. Pande quotes from the *Karmavipāka* in which it is said that Brāhmaṇas who study the Vedas after consuming betel leaf are later born into the *kula* of Devarāṣṭrīya Brāhmaṇas.[20] Pande also mentions another work, the *Tristhalīsetu*, which states that Brāhmaṇas who subsisted only by farming and agriculture became Citapāvana Brāhmaṇas,[21] one of the five kinds of Brāhmaṇas—Devalaka, Citapāvana, Gayāval, Devarukhe, and Karhāḍe—that are barred from Vedic duties.[22] Some are barred from performing *yajña*s, others from *yajña*s and *śrāddha*s; some should not be sighted first thing in the morning, while others should not attend feasts reserved for higher Brāhmaṇas. Finally, some may not recite the Brahmagāyatrī-*mantra*. Pande ends his arguments by saying that

> my discussion and logic are as clear and visible as the brilliant sun. However, for those who are like the stars falling in the night, the sun is obviously invisible. Further, for those who have been blinded by the darkness of hate and thoughtlessness, the greatness and the Brāhmaṇahood of the Devalakas are not apparent (18).

Chapter one ends with the following colophon:

> Here ends the first chapter of the first part of the *Laghu Śaivāgama*, entitled 'The judgement on the *varṇa* rights of the Devalaka Brāhmaṇas.' It includes a commentary in Marathi, produced by the Śivadvija Sitaram, the temple priest of Jāgṛteśvara temple, by the blessing of Lord Jāgṛteśvara (18).

Chapter two retells the story of Sudarśana, and it has much in common with the events described in the *Jñāna Saṃhitā* and the *Devalaka Kathāmṛta*. However, Pande takes two or three *śloka*s at a time from *Jñāna Saṃhitā* 44 and provides a commentary in a way that benefits his Marathi cause. In a lengthy discussion, Pande emphasizes the importance of the Devalakas, and thus of the Guravas, in Śiva's *pūjā*, and he chastises the Brāhmaṇas for their greed and jealousy. Pande quotes and comments on all fifty-four *śloka*s of the *Jñāna Saṃhitā*. The majority of Pande's Gurava readers would know little Sanskrit and would regard his frequent quoting of Sanskrit *śloka*s as a sign of erudition.

After official commentary, Pande speculates on the possible etymology of the word '*gurava*.' He suggests that the story of Sudarśana proves that the Devalakas are the *guru*s or *upādhye*s[23] for the pilgrims and devotees at Śiva temples. He claims that the highest among the Brāhmaṇas, well versed in the Vedas, must worship the Devalakas at the Śiva temple first.[24] Pande argues that the Devalakas are the *guru*s. His logic is that as the plural of *guru* is *guravaḥ*, the Śiva temple priests are known collectively as *guravaḥ*. As the plurals Brāhmaṇāḥ and Vaiśyāḥ become Brāhmaṇa and Vaiśya in Marathi (because they loose the *–aḥ* at the end), it naturally follows that the plural *guravaḥ* would become *gurava*. As proof of his ingenious arguments, Pande cites his encounter with a Kannada Brāhmaṇa, and he describes the prolonged discussions they had regarding the status of the Guravas. With the help of books such as the *Jātimālā*, this Brāhmaṇa convinced Pande that the Guravas were Brāhmaṇas at Śiva temples.[25]

Pande's third chapter begins by quoting two *śloka*s from the *Mahāśaivāgama*[26] in which Śiva informs Pārvatī that Śuddhaśaivas are those who have been born of Śiva himself. The Śivadvijas should be revered and not be denied the adequate *dakṣiṇā* that is owed to them. Pande once again distinguishes the Guravas from the other Brāhmaṇas who, in his view, often encroach upon the Guravas' right to perform Śiva's *pūjā* and to accept material gain for it.

Pande defines three types of Śaivas: the Śuddhaśaivas or the Guravas, the Vīraśaivas, and the Sāmānyaśaivas. Sāmānyaśaivas are not Śaiva Brāhmaṇas. They may belong to any, except the Brāhmaṇa, *varṇa*, but their main *dharma* is the worship of Śiva. The author then narrates a brief statement on the origin of

the Śuddhaśaivas:

> Once Śiva was practicing austerities on the banks of the river Sindhu when a lustrous being emanated from his body. He was variously called Śaiva, Tapodhana, and Śivadvija. Like Sudarśana, Śiva called him his son and taught him the sacred Śivasandhyā- and Śivagāyatrī-*mantras* (35).[27]

According to Pande, then, the Śaiva Brāhmaṇas or the Śuddhaśaivas have originated in two ways, from Sudarśana or alternatively from the lustrous being described above, but the Vīraśaivas share a common origin. Pande takes up his argument again and relates another myth regarding the origin of the Vīraśaivas. This myth tells us that there was once a terrible fight between the Śuddhaśaivas and Agni, who receives *bali*, the share of offerings at sacrifices on behalf of all the gods. Pande gives no reason for the fight (but the obvious reference is to Dakṣa's sacrifice, when, according to one version, Vīrabhadra was born). In the battle between the Śuddhaśaivas and Agni, the enraged Śuddhaśaivas kicked the earth, and a lustrous being was produced as a result. He was variously called Vīraśaiva, Bhasmāṅkura, and Jaṅgama. Śiva did not give him any varṇic rights. However, he was allowed to beg from all four *varṇas*. Pande points out that the difference between a Śuddhaśaiva and a Vīraśaiva is that although the former is allowed to keep for his own use all the offerings made to Śiva, the latter may only take as much as is required for mere sustenance. Pande is well aware of the fact that Marathi Brāhmaṇas equate the Guravas with the Vīraśaivas and their priests, the Jaṅgamas. To them all three are Śūdras. This must be seen as Pande's attempt to elevate the Guravas above the Vīraśaivas in the caste hierarchy. While he accepts the Guravas as fallen Devalaka Brāhmaṇas, he places the Jaṅgamas in a lower category.

Pande goes on to say that some Brāhmaṇas are of the opinion similar to that of the Śivadvijas (the Guravas) and believe that others born out of *varṇasaṅkara* also have the right to Śiva's *pūjā* and to accept *śivasvam*. These Brāhmaṇas quote the *Śūdrakamalākara* in support of their argument:

> A fallen Śiva worshipper of the Pāśupata sect is known as a Jaṅgama. A son born to a Jaṅgama by a Śūdra wife is called a Bhasmāṅkura. Wearing matted hair and *bhasma*, he should worship the Śiva *liṅga*. The betel leaves, rice, money, cows, cowry shells, and so on, that are given to Śiva by others out of devotion are called Caṇḍīśa. Bhasmāṅkura's livelihood is by this Caṇḍīśa (37).

Pande then mentions that other Brāhmaṇas are of the opinion that the Jaṅgamas

are born from Śivadvija's feet and are therefore different from the Bhasmāṅkuras. He is keen to show that the opinion of the latter Brāhmaṇas is correct, and he cites Kamalakarabhatta's grandfather, Narayanabhatta, who wrote the *Jātimālā*:

> Those Devalaka Brāhmaṇas who fell from their duties of performing austerities are known as Guravas. They are also known as Śivadvijas. A son born to a Gurava of a Śūdra wife is a Bhasmāṅkura, and he is known popularly as a Jaṅgama. Wearing matted locks and *bhasma*, he should perform the *pūjā* of the Śiva *liṅga*. Items such as betel leaves, fruit, rice, and so on, offered to Śiva should be consumed by him. Thus say the Śaivāgamas (38).

The first quote above portrays the Bhasmāṅkuras lower than the Jaṅgamas; the second makes the Jaṅgamas lower than the Guravas. In both cases, it is a Śūdra mother who determines the status of the child; the union is *anuloma*. It is permissible but degrading to the progeny.

Pande extols the sage Narayanabhatta as a great *paṇḍita* who made even the Yavana king pay respect to him when he caused rain to fall on his command. The sage was also able to persuade the Yavana king to permit the Hindus to rebuild the Kāśīviśveśvara temple destroyed by Aurangzeb.[28] Finally, Pande tells us that even Kamalakarabhatta, in the introduction to the *Śūdrakamalākara*, pays homage to his famous grandfather thus: 'I bow to Bhattanarayana, my grandfather, Hari who assumed human form to protect the Vedas and the *dharma*.' Here Pande draws on Marathi tradition, implying that the work of such a great scholar and sage is beyond approach. Finally, he cites the *Jātidarpaṇa*, authored by Narayanabhatta's son and Kamalakarabhatta's father, Ramakrishnabhatta. It distinguishes between the Guravas and the Jaṅgamas to the detriment of the latter.

Pande concludes his exposition by suggesting that both the Guravas and the Jaṅgamas are Pāśupatas. He distinguishes the Guravas as *vipra* (Brāhmaṇa) Pāśupatas and the Jaṅgamas as Śaṅkara Pāśupatas who are produced as a result of hypogamy.

Pande's ambitious aim in the third chapter is to prove the Brāhmaṇahood of the Guravas, ends up arguing for the distinction of the Guravas above all the other Śaivites.

Unusual as it may seem, we might say that the *Laghu Śaivāgama* is a Jātipurāṇa written as a typical Sanskrit work in which *ślokas* are compiled from the *Jñāna Saṃhitā* and other texts, while the *ṭīka* (commentary) and the translation are in Marathi. Stylistically, it closely resembles the *Śūdrakamalākara*. One might even say that it is a counterpoint to the *Śūdrakamalākara*, the sole purpose of which seems to be to denigrate and exclude Śūdras from most ritual

participation. Pande's work is not a defense of Śūdras but an affirmation of the Devalakas as Brāhmaṇas. Like Kamalakarabhatta, Pande is an erudite scholar who knows how to borrow adroitly from the Sanskrit *parampara*, and he also writes his Marathi translation as a stirring commentary for the Marathi public.

Pande's argumentative technique is simple. He uses attack as the best defense and defense as the best attack. He recognizes that the Brāhmaṇas are major opponents and knows well that status depends upon the acceptance or rejection of a group's offerings to Śiva. His argument centers around the contentious statement in *Jñāna Saṃhitā* 44 that the Devalakas were denied Brahmagāyatrī. Against this, he asserts that the Devalakas are the highest of the Brāhmaṇas, that is, they are solely entitled to the privilege of making offerings to Śiva. In short, he argues that the Śivagāyatrī is the original *gāyatrī*. He supports these claims not just by means of textual references, but he unleashes an invective against the Brāhmaṇas of a kind not normally heard from any Hindu but the Cārvākans. He says that the Brāhmaṇas are covetous and jealous because they are depraved. The Devalakas must take what is theirs as ordained by Śiva.

Another tactic he employs is to argue that all the Marathi Brāhmaṇas are sullied in one way or another and that only the Devalakas hold on to pure *dharma* by following *Jñāna Saṃhitā* 44. Thus, he turns what is meant to degrade the Devalakas to their advantage. Finally, he traces links from the Devalakas to Brahmā, the arch-Brāhmaṇa, through his son Dadhici. Pande's claim in uncompromising: among the Śaivite priests, the Guravas are the highest. By raising issues of etymology and by illustrating the connection with Karnataka, Pande also makes astute appeal to modernity.

THE *STHŪLA ŚAIVĀGAMA*

This third Gurava Jātipurāṇa is compiled in Sanskrit verse. The printed text of the *Sthūla Śaivāgama* is in palmleaf manuscript format, measures sixteen by ten centimeters, and contains fifty-six pages in six chapters. In addition, a thirteen-page addendum details the daily rituals of Śiva devotees. The text gives important information about the various Śaiva sects (*śākhās*) and *gotras*. Like the *Laghu Śaivāgama*, this Purāṇa mentions the term '*gurava*' in one of its *ślokas*, and it declares that Śuddhaśaivas have long been known as Guravas and that they belong to the Brāhmaṇa *varṇa*. The last page of the Purāṇa states that it was compiled by (the Gurava) Kashinathswami Jehurkar, son of Bhagwantswami of Jehur Maṭha. Jehurkar writes that this publication was made possible by the financial help given by many people to (Gurava) Bhavanirao Bapurao

Dange Solapurkar, who published it at the Dattaprasada Press.

The date of the publication is Monday, the twelfth day of full moon in the month of Māgha, Śālivāhana Śaka 1831 (1909 CE). Jehurkar stresses that the text 'is a small effort on our part to explain to the people the *ācāra*s of the Devalaka Brāhmaṇas, also known as Śuddhaśaivas or Guravas.' He writes that 'due to the absence of people with a good knowledge of Sanskrit among us, I have been forced to take the material out of old Sanskrit manuscripts without checking it for grammatical correctness.' He then asks 'knowledgeable readers to convey to him grammatical mistakes that they may find in the work, so that they can be corrected in the second edition' (71). The attitude of humility implied by the request is not uncommon among writers in Sanskrit.

In fact, Jehurkar is well informed about the various Śaiva doctrines and Śaivāgamas. His book is a compilation of material taken from various texts expounding Śaivism. At the beginning of each chapter, the name of the original work from which the chapter has been drawn is listed.

The *Sthūla Śaivāgama* cannot be called a Jātipurāṇa in the strict sense, as it is a reproduction of chapters from various Śaivite texts. Although intertexuality is an important feature of most Purāṇas, it is the only feature of the *Sthūla Śaivāgama*. Jehurkar's original contribution is his own commentary on, and including translation of, the selected Sanskrit materials. The *Sthūla Śaivāgama* is a *saṃhitā* with commentary. Even so, it is a major contribution in its own right. Jehurkar, the compiler, provides elaborate explanations and a keen analysis in Marathi of all the Sanskrit *śloka*s included in the text. (These explanations shed some light on the reasons why Jehurkar, himself a Gurava, put this compilation together.) The *Sthūla Śaivāgama* is used by many Guravas as a Jātipurāṇa, and this justifies a careful study of it.

Summary of the contents of the Sthūla Śaivāgama

After traditional homage to Gaṇeśa and Sarasvatī, chapter one has Pārvatī asking Śiva to explain why the Śuddhaśaivas are considered the greatest among the Brāhmaṇas. She also asks how many kinds of Śaivas exist. Śiva replies that there are seven kinds of Śaivas: Anādiśaiva, one without beginning, that is, Śiva himself; Ādiśaivas, the first Śaivas, that is, the *ṛṣi*s Kauśika, Kaśyapa, Bhāradvāja, Atri, and Gautama; Mahāśaivas, the great Śaivas, that is, Brāhmaṇas ordained in the Śaiva way; Anuśaivas, followers of the Śaiva-*dharma*, such as kings and Vaiśyas; Avāntaraśaivas, other Śaivas, that is, Śūdras ordained in the Śaiva way; Pravaraśaivas, devotees born of an *anuloma* union; and Antyaśaivas, born in other low castes, that is, the lowest Śaivas.

At the end of this chapter, Śiva also classifies Śaivas according to their

particular practice of worship. These are: the Vīraśaivas, Śaivas who have transcended the boundaries of the six vices, including lust and anger, and who have looked within themselves to the *ātman* (self); the Śuddhaśaivas, the pure Śaiva Brāhmaṇas who have been born from Śiva and who are held in high esteem by the people; the Miśraśaivas, those who worship all deities, including Śiva; and the Sāmānyaśaivas, the ordinary people who worship Śiva.

The author claims that the first chapter of the *Sthūla Śaivāgama* is a faithful reproduction of the second chapter of the *Śaivaratnākara*. However, chapter two of *Śaivaratnākara* differs considerably from the version produced in the *Sthūla Śaivāgama*. The diction of several *śloka*s is different, and many *śloka*s in the *Sthūla Śaivāgama* have no parallel in the *Śaivaratnākara*.

Some *śloka*s in the *Sthūla Śaivāgama* seem to be there for the sole purpose of differentiating between the Śuddhaśaivas (Guravas) and the Vīraśaivas and denigrating the latter. Jehurkar provides rather free translations of all the *śloka*s, such as these quoted below.

In *śloka*s 25–28, Śiva says:

> The Śaiva produced from me is called the Śuddhaśaiva. [Such people] are known as Śivadvijas, and they become venerable among people. The sacrifices for self and others should be performed only by them. They should then be given a *dakṣiṇā*, and no deceit should be practiced. The Śuddhaśaiva is thus. Now hear about the Vīraśaiva. Having lost faults such as anger, and having examined the self within, and by the complete loss of doubt and weakness, a Vīraśaiva is born. Pārvatī! I have now told you the three ways about becoming a Vīraśaiva.

These *śloka*s differentiate the Śuddhaśaivas from the Vīraśaivas (Liṅgāyats). This distinction is important for Jehurkar, in that he equates the Guravas as Brāhmaṇas and Śuddhaśaivas (that is, Brāhmaṇas) in contrast to the Vīraśaivas who doctrinally reject the *varṇa* system altogether. Were the Guravas to be taken as Vīraśaivas, they would be totally outside the *varṇa* system. This would decisively defeat their claim to Brāhmaṇahood.

The second chapter of the *Śaivaratnākara* is short and also deals with differences among the Śaivas. It lists the seven types of Śaivas but declares that those possessing the five *gotra*s are born of the five mouths (*pañcamukha*) of Śiva. These are the Śuddhaśaivas, and, as possessors of *gotra*s, they are also Brāhmaṇas. On pain of being reborn as Brahmarākṣasas, they must avoid *śivadīkṣā* and the touch of the *liṅga*. If, during their *pūjā*, a *dīkṣita* enters the sanctum, then they should purify it again with *mantra*s.

The text mentions the Vīraśaivas and extols them as possessors of esoteric

knowledge and of knowing the way to *mokṣa*. This chapter divides Śaiva teachings into *śrauta* (heard) and *aśrauta* (literally 'not heard but remembered'). The former is time-consuming, but its reward is that it dissolves the self prior to *mokṣa*. The latter is essentially to be pursued by others according to their *jātidharma*. *Śrauta* here refers to be 'heard' from Śiva himself and is therefore 'authentic.'

Chapter two of the *Sthūla Śaivagāma* contains the Śaivite version of the Puruṣasūkta. In this story, Śiva replaces the Puruṣa, and the Vedas, the earth, and the Brāhmaṇas are created out of Śiva's mouth, the Kṣatriyas from his arms, the Vaiśyas from his heart, and the Śūdras from his feet. The duties of each of these *varṇa*s is then outlined. While the chapter posits the theological primacy of Śiva, there is no mention of the Guravas here. Jehurkar is knowledgeable about the mythical account of the origin of the *varṇa* system, and he purposefully reproduces a Śaivite text that has very high Brāhmaṇical status. His purpose is to assert that some Śaivites, especially the Guravas, accept the *varṇa* system. This is a tactical prerequisite in the fight to accord Brāhmaṇic status to the Guravas, and the implication of this is that since Jaṅgamas and Vīrśaivas reject the caste/*varṇa* system, they need not be reckoned with in the context of the Brāhmaṇa *varṇa* for the Śaivite priests. The Marathi Brāhmaṇas, it may be noted, do not trace their origin from Śiva. The Brāhmaṇas all over India claim to be human (*mānava*) in the tripartite scheme, '*deva, dānava,* and *mānava*' They also trace their lineages (*gotra*) from the seers who are also *mānava*s. The Gurava's claim to descent from Śiva himself violates this classification and hence puts them in conflict with the Brāhmaṇas.

One may question the need for a Śaivite version of the Puruṣasūkta myth and wonder at the total absence of the Guravas in it. It would seem that Jehurkar's purpose is to undermine the Brāhmaṇa allegiance to the Vedas and to incorporate them into the Śaivite fold. Jehurkar wants to deny the Brāhmaṇas the claim that all their activities are *vedokta*. I have argued elsewhere (Bapat 1998) that the *vedokta-purāṇokta* distinction is the most critical element when denying Brāhmaṇic status to the Guravas. Jehurkar seems to imply that if the Guravas are not to be entitled to the Vedas, then let the Brāhmaṇas give up the Vedas in favor of Śiva. Under Śiva the Brāhmaṇas would have little ground on which to deny the Guravas their claim.

Chapter three, putatively derived from the *Śaivaprabandha*, describes the visage and greatness of Śiva. It also makes a curious reference to Śiva being the god of the Jainas. Chapters four and five deal with the ritual procedures for a Tantric *pūjā* of Śiva. The sacredness and greatness of the five-lettered *mantra*, '*namaḥ śivāya*,' and the six-lettered *mantra*, '*oṃ namaḥ śivāya*,' are also explained. Finally, chapter six narrates the now-familiar story of Dadhici and his

son Sudarśana and the birth of the Devalaka Brāhmaṇas, taken from the *Jñāna Saṃhitā* of the *Śiva Purāṇa*.

Taking chapters from various Āgamic texts, it appears that Jehurkar has a dual purpose in mind. Compilation from a variety of auspicious texts gives Jehurkar and his work a high scholarly status, respectability, and an impression of authenticity in the minds of Guravas and others, especially Brāhmaṇas. Furthermore, like Sitaram Dajiba Pande (the author of the *Laghu Śaivāgama*), Jehurkar is able to produce *śloka*s that clearly differentiate between the Guravas, who call themselves Brāhmaṇas, and the Liṅgāyats, who are looked down upon by the Guravas but who occupy priestly positions in many important Śiva temples in Maharashtra and Karnataka. Jehurkar is a mild-mannered scholar who seeks to persuade rather than disabuse the Brāhmaṇas.

GAURAVA

Gaurava is a recent publication in Hindi by Omdatta Arya from Madhya Pradesh. During an interview, Arya related that his forebears were Śaiva Guravas by caste who had arrived in Madhya Pradesh from Maharashtra with the Śinḍes and the Holkars in the middle of the eighteenth century. Since Madhya Pradesh is a Hindi-speaking region, they adopted Ārya as their surname. The author indicates his Gurava origin on the first page of the booklet and believes that he is fortunate to have been born in the Gurava Brāhmaṇa caste. This modest text, thirty-one pages in seven chapters, was published by the author's late father, Nanuram Arya, at Kirti Printing Press, Ujjain, Madhya Pradesh, in 1981.

On the first page, Arya acknowledges his debt to his father, to Girijashankar Nirbhayaram, who wrote the Gujarati work *Tapodhana Tattvaprakāśa*, and to Chotelal Sharma, the author of *Saptakhaṇḍī Jāti Nirṇaya*. Both these works figure in the following discussion.

The only page of chapter one praises the greatness of Śiva. It claims that over 60 percent of Hindus are worshippers of Śiva, the 'god of gods.' To support this, Arya points out that Śiva's temples outnumber those of all the other gods put together. Śiva's greatness is further shown by indicating the sites of twelve Jyotirliṅga temples located throughout India.

The two pages of the second chapter illustrate the intimate relationship between the famous sage Dadhici and Śiva. A story is told of a quarrel between King Kṣuva and Dadhici about the status of Brāhmaṇas and Kṣatriyas. The king maintains that Kṣatriyas have more power and hence a higher status, but Dadhici disagrees. Eventually the king approaches Viṣṇu and is told that the Brāhmaṇas

are indeed superior to Kṣatriyas. Arya says that because Dadhici, a Śiva devotee, was insulted during this episode by Kṣuva (with Viṣṇu's complicity), all the gods and goddesses had to suffer Śiva's anger during Dakṣa's sacrifice. Arya's aim is to show the superiority of the Brāhmaṇas who are devotees of Śiva over those who are devotees of Viṣṇu. Since the Guravas call themselves Śaiva Brāhmaṇas, the intention is to demonstrate their superiority.

Chapter three narrates the myth of King Vṛtra, who could only be killed by Indra with a weapon constructed from Dadhici's bones. This establishes Dadhici's great worth even to the gods. Arya then casually states that the descendants of Sudarśana, Dadhici's sons, are known as 'Gurava Brāhmaṇas' in Maharashtra and Madhya Pradesh and as 'Tapodhana Brāhmaṇas' in Gujarat.[29] He asserts that these are one and the same. As proof, he cites the ritual of sixteen Mondays (*solāsomavāra vrata*), a vow observed in Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, and Gujarat.[30] While the Marathi *pothī* (a manuscript or print made up of loose leaves) describing the *vrata* mentions a Gurava associated with the myth, the Gujarati version replaces the word '*gurava*' with '*tapodhana*.' After declaring that the Gurava and Tapodhana Brāhmaṇas are the same, Arya ends the chapter by reiterating that the Guravas and the Tapodhanas are the descendants of Dadhici and that the performance of Śiva's *pūjā* is their main function.

Chapters four and five demonstrate the *raison d'être* of Arya's book. In chapter four, he reproduces the Devalaka myth as found in *Jñāna Saṃhitā* 43 and 44. Arya argues that the *śloka*s that portray the Devalakas, and hence the Guravas, as Śūdras have been deliberately altered by jealous Brāhmaṇas. Several times in his work he draws a connection between the Guravas and Sudarśana. The arguments he uses and the *śloka*s he quotes (*Jñāna Saṃhitā* 44.1–41, 44.53–54, with comments) to prove his point are reproduced verbatim from the *Tapodhana Tattvaprakāśa*. Such careful cross-referencing demonstrates the scholarly depth of the work and augments his own argument.

The fifth chapter is devoted to a discussion of *śivanirmālya*. Arya says that by custom, the Brāhmaṇas in Maharashtra, Karnataka, and Madhya Pradesh do not accept offerings made to Śiva. He suggests in his commentary that this custom is nothing but a manifestation of the traditional rivalry between the Śaivites and the Vaiṣṇavites. To support his argument, he quotes the *Śaivasudhākara Candrikā*[31] by the Śaṅkarācārya of Jyotir Maṭha (in the north):

> Brāhmaṇas, Kṣatriyas and Vaiśyas are the twice-born *varṇa*s. Many people among these *varṇa*s have discarded their religion and have succumbed to false, heretic notions. As a result of this, they gave up Śiva-*pūjā* and are wary of accepting the offerings made to Śiva. Why should one accept the offerings

> made to Viṣṇu as *prasādam* and not those made to Śiva? The notion of not consuming *śivaprasādam* is obviously perpetuated by those who hate Śiva (22)..

The Śaṅkarācārya supports his opinion by quoting several verses from the *Kaurmakhaṇḍa Purāṇa*.[32] Here is one such verse:

> O Arjuna! Those Brāhmaṇas who were cursed by the goddess at the time of Dakṣa's sacrifice will be reborn as Brāhmaṇas dominated by the *tamoguṇa*. These Brāhmaṇas will be heretics and will slander Śiva in the Kali Yuga (22).

According to that same Purāṇa, Dadhici warns Dakṣa that all those who hate Śiva will act against the tenets of the Vedas, will subscribe to false notions about the Dharmaśāstras, and will have to endure much sadness in the Kali Yuga. They will go to various hells after their death. In the Kali Yuga, they will all worship Viṣṇu and will oppose Śiva's worship. Arya mentions that the Śaṅkarācārya of Dvārakā in Gujarat also made similar remarks about *śivanirmālya*.

The next three pages describe the importance of *śivanirmālya* for Śiva devotees and particularly for the Guravas who have the god-ordained right to the offerings made to Śiva. Once again, Arya uses the arguments and verses by Girijashankar Nirbhayaram to support the propriety of the consumption of *śivanirmālya* by the worshipper as well as the officiating priest.

Chapter six of the *Gaurava* deals with the origin of the Gurava Brāhmaṇas. Arya quotes the *Saptakhaṇḍī Jāti Nirṇaya* which suggests that Gurava is a caste of Brāhmaṇas in South India and Madhya Pradesh and that the name Gurava came from the word '*gaurava*,' meaning admiration and respect. The temple priests were treated with great respect by people.[33]

Arya's purpose for devoting a substantial part of a chapter to *Saptakhaṇḍī Jāti Nirṇaya* seems to be twofold. First, as the compiler of the work was a Brāhmaṇa, his opinion about the Guravas' Brāhmaṇahood would carry substantial weight. Second, the compilation was a major effort in several volumes organized by the Hindu Dharma Varṇa Vyavasthā Maṇḍala, which reached most parts of India. The mention of the Guravas' Brāhmaṇahood in this kind of work would signal acceptance by the wider community of Hindus.

Arya reiterates that other Brāhmaṇas envied the status of the Guravas and, therefore, 'spread many rumors about them which were, of course, blatantly false' (27).

The last chapter consists of a single page which provides some details about Dadhici's birth anniversary and quotes the Śivagāyatrī-*mantra*.[34]

Arya is a reasonable scholar who skillfully argues that the jealousy and envy of other Marathi Brāhmaṇas is the cause of their contention with the Guravas. He uses no abusive language and not much Sanskrit scholarship, although he seems well aware of the presence of relevant works in Sanskrit.

THE *GURUVARYA GURAVA KATHĀMṚTA* OR *ŚIVAMAHIMECĪ NANDĀVRATAKATHĀ*

The last of the Gurava Jātipurāṇas was written in Marathi by a Gurava, Sangītācārya Shankar Guruji in 1992, and was published by his wife, Shanta Gurava, at Comp-Print Kalpana Press, Pune. It consists of five *adhyāya*s, totaling sixty-three pages in printed book format. Shankar Guruji suggests that the material in this Purāṇa was obtained from the *Śaṃbholiṅga Purāṇa*, composed in Kannada.[35]

The *Śivamahimecī Nandāvratakathā*'s prefatory pages contain dedicatory photographs and include the written dedication by the author, his own photograph, and another dedicatory verse addressed to his *guru*. As well, the preface includes a note from the publisher (his wife) and a biographical statement about the author. There is a list of Gurava patronymics, each containing the term '*guru*,' and a parallel list of Śiva's paraphernalia, such as his weapons and items of worship. Next are a *stotram* (hymn) worshipping Śiva as the *guru*, an appeal to observe the Nandā *vrata*, and the call for *vidhi* to perform it. The *Ṛg Veda*, the *Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad*, the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*, the *Bhagavad Gītā*, and the *Rāmcaritmānas* are all invoked to detail the greatness of Śiva. Such long prefaces are not unusual in religious books sold in many *bāzār*s outside large temples all over India. Such extraneous material is absent in the Sanskrit Purāṇas, and thus this work must be considered modern.

The language of the notes and the main text is in the simplest Marathi, but, as would befit a *Jñāna Purāṇa*, there are invocations to Gaṇeśa, Sarasvatī, Śaṅkara, and Pārvatī, the author's parents, all the gods, and the Gauravas. However, his Sanskrit grammar is faulty. At the end of each *adhyāya*, there is a closing formula and the statement, 'Announce the great victory of the god of gods, Hara.' At the end are three Marathi *āratī*s, which indicate verbal offerings to be sung at Śiva's *pūjā*.

The *Nandāvratakathā* differs from other Gurava Jātipurāṇas we have examined because the author makes no use of the Devalaka myth. Instead, the author narrates two alternative myths about the origin of the Śaiva Guravas. It is significant that, by 1992, at least some of the Śaiva Guravas were unwilling to

admit to the transgression of their putative forebear, Sudarśana. The *Nandā-vratakathā* contains no record of any transgression by the Gurava ancestor.

In his introduction, Shankar Guruji asserts that many great men were born in the Gurava community. Because of their adherence to *dharma*, the Śaiva Brāhmaṇas experience the universal god and show the way to salvation. One should therefore trust in their ways, and, like them, one should perform *vrata*s and worship god. (He reproduces in detail my own interview about the Guravas published in *Sakāḷa* [December 1, 1991], detailing the stone inscriptions and the meetings between the Guravas and the Śaṅkarācārya.)[36] He lists twenty-one 'ancient' surnames that he claims are those of the Guravas. He seems to be unaware that, unlike *gotra* identity, the possession of patronymic surnames is not an Indian practice; such surnames were not usual before the time of the British. Furthermore, none of these are used as surnames by contemporary Guravas.

Shankar Guruji outlines the Nandā *vrata*, which involves bathing the Śiva *liṅga* under flowing water for five minutes while chanting the Śivapañcākṣarī-*mantra*. A detailed *ṣoḍaśapacāra-pūjā* of Śiva follows. This procedure is to be repeated on twenty-one consecutive Mondays. On the twenty-second Monday, a Gurava is invited to recite the story of the *vrata*.[37] If possible, a silver Śiva *liṅga* should be presented to the Gurava priest.

The first *adhyāya* of the text relates the story of Dakṣa and his sacrifice. When Satī throws herself into the fire, Śiva retires to the forest to practice austerities. As Śiva performs these terrible austerities, his sweat falls to the ground, and a beautiful male child is born of it. The second *adhyāya* continues the same story. The special boy is nurtured by Mother Earth and hence comes to be called Bhomeśvaranātha. He became a great devotee of Śiva. By the age of fourteen, he performed the Nandā *vrata*. He assumed the role of a teacher and started giving discourses on Śaivism at Kāśī. His fame spread. People all over the world praised him, but this caused jealousy amongst some *paṇḍita*s. The daughter of the sage Praṇava, Vidyāvatī, attended his discourses and fell in love with him. She desired to marry him, but her father was jealous of Bhomeśvaranātha, and he refused to allow the marriage. Seeing her daughter's grief, Vidyāvatī's mother advised her to perform the Nandā *vrata*.

One day, the story goes, King Gabhasti of Kāśī organized a musical concert. Praṇava was proud of his singing prowess and challenged one and all to compete with him. Bhomeśvaranātha took up the challenge. He came forward, recited Śiva's five-lettered *mantra*, and then sang. His singing was so enchanting that the celestial singers and dancers showered flowers upon him from the sky. Praṇava, furious and insulted, left the gathering. Later, the Earth herself, as Bhomeśvaranātha's mother, approached the sage and asked for

Vidyāvatī's hand for her son. But the sage had only revenge in mind. He consented to their union, but on the actual occasion of the wedding, he told the eager Bhomeśvaranātha that the wedding would not take place, 'for he had neither a father nor a *gotra*.' He added that Bhomeśvaranātha was an utter fool to expect to marry Vidyāvatī. He questioned his education and the Vedas he had studied. The groom-to-be replied that his father was Śiva himself and his mother was the Earth. He replied that he had studied the *Yajur Veda* and was a Śaiva Brāhmaṇa. He had also learned the *Sāma Veda* and music. Praṇava *ṛṣi* scoffed at his answers. However, at this juncture, the sage Nārada, Nandikeśvara (the bull of Śiva), and Śiva's *gaṇa*s appeared and vouched for the truth of Bhomeśvaranātha's statements. Praṇava relented and consented to the wedding, which then took place with great ceremony and pomp.

Adhyāya three tells us that Bhomeśvaranātha left his pregnant wife for the Himālayas in order to practice austerities. In due course, Vidyāvatī delivered a son while she was praying at the Bhairavanātha temple. Śiva appeared before her, blessed the child, and told her that because her son was born in the Bhairavanātha temple, he would be known by that name. The son also grew to be a great Śiva devotee.

Bhomeśvaranātha remained contented meditating in the Himālayas, Śiva's abode. One day, as Śiva was playing on his drum, it fell to the ground and broke. Bhomeśvaranātha quickly repaired it. The delighted god told Bhomeśvaranātha that he and his descendants would henceforth become proficient at repairing musical instruments. Bhomeśvaranātha also made many garlands for Pārvatī. Pleased with this, the goddess told Bhomeśvaranātha that he would be known as Phulāgri or Phulāri. Picking flowers for Śiva and the goddess and making garlands would become his and his descendents' chosen vocation.

Meanwhile, Bhomeśvaranātha's son Bhairavanātha married Śaivavatī and spent time in the worship of Śiva. He established many Śiva *liṅga*s on the banks of rivers and performed many sacrifices. He established a Śiva *liṅga* at the source of the Mandākinī River in the Himālayas and constructed a Śiva temple for it. The fame of Bhairavanātha spread everywhere, and people flocked to worship at the temple.

Indra resolved to test Bhairavanātha's devotion to Śiva, and he appeared before him, disguised as a Brāhmaṇa guest who refused to eat with Bhairavanātha. He told Bhairavanātha that because his wife Śaivavatī had no children, she was not fit to serve food to a Brāhmaṇa. Śaivavatī was greatly distressed and was advised by her husband to perform the Nandā *vrata*.

Bhairavanātha himself went to Mount Kailāsa and prayed to Śiva with great devotion but to no avail. In despair, Bhairavanātha jumped off a cliff, but Śiva gently picked him up and conferred several boons upon him. The god

declared Bhairavanātha his greatest devotee on earth and decreed that the *pūjā* performed by him would be the most important *pūjā* for Śiva. Furthermore, the text states that the offerings made to Śiva by other devotees would belong to Bhairavanātha. Whatever favor Bhairavanātha asked on behalf of the devotee during a *pūjā* would be granted. The cliff from where he jumped would be known as Bhairavazep (the place of Bhairava's jump).[38] Śiva told Bhairavanātha that he would for ever be adored by people and that his name will have the suffix 'Gaurava.' Saying this Śiva disappeared. All the gods, including Indra, showered flowers on Bhairavanātha. When he returned home everyone rejoiced. Śaivavatī had also completed her *vrata*, and with Śiva's blessing, five sons were born to her. The third *adhyāya* concludes with a *phalaśruti* verse enjoining all to recite the text.

The fourth *adhyāya* tells the story of the five sons of Bhairavanātha, four of whom—Gurunātha, Amarnātha, Somanātha, and Umākānta—married and went, according to their father's wish, to the four corners of the world to establish Śiva *liṅga*s. The fifth son, Candrakānta, married his cousin, Madhuvantī, and lived in a forest near Dvārakā. The couple had a son called Kumāra. When he was five, his *upanayana* was performed in accordance with Śaiva Brāhmaṇa customs.[39] He too became a great Śiva devotee.

One day, Nandikeśvara decided to test Kumāra's devotion. Under the guise of a *ṛṣi*, he came to the temple where Kumāra's father was performing Śiva's *pūjā*. Kumāra was picking flowers and *bel* leaves for the *pūjā* when he was bitten by a snake. He lay dying in the temple garden. His mother Madhuvantī came out in the garden, saw her son lying unconscious, and was grief-stricken. However, as it was *pūjā* time, she collected flowers and *bel* leaves herself and performed the *pūjā* along with her husband. Both of them then humbly invited all the gathered devotees to eat with them. However, Nandikeśvara, in the guise of a *ṛṣi*, insisted on their calling Kumāra to dinner as well. The distraught mother was forced into calling Kumāra and was surprised when he came in without showing any signs of poisoning.[40] Nandikeśvara then assumed his usual bull form, and all the gathered devotees offered him prayers. The sage Nārada appeared and told Candrakānta, Madhuvantī, and Kumāra that they all deserved adoration (*gaurava*) and that Lord Śiva himself had named them 'Gaurava.' He said, 'Your actions befit your name. Kumāra will make your *kula* famous, and he himself will become a great Śiva devotee' (46).

Kumāra became such an ardent worshipper that at his *pūjā*, Śiva always appeared in person and ate with him.[41] When his father Candrakānta found this out, he was ecstatic. Śiva told the father and the son that their ardent devotion earned them the right to consume the offerings to Śiva.

The fifth *adyāya* tells the story of Bhairavanātha's third son, Somnātha, who

went to Andhra and was enchanted by Terāvatī,[42] the daughter of the Nāgārjuna and the Śrīgiri Mountains. He marries her. He gathered all the people on the banks of the Pinākinī River, and with their help, he established a Śiva *liṅga* there. He lived close by at Nādabalāpuram. With Śiva's blessing he fathered eleven sons whose initiation was performed according to Gurava customs. They were also given training in the Vedas and Vedic rituals. Ten of them were sent to Karnataka. The eleventh son Śubhaṅkara was also an ardent Śiva devotee, and he became very famous. The king of Nādabalāpuram, Vinābhramaṇa, had a daughter named Vijayā. One day, travelling in her chariot, she noticed Śubhaṅkara carrying some beautiful flowers. The princess demanded the flowers be put in her chariot, and Śubhaṅkara could come and collect money for them from the palace the next day. Śubhaṅkara refused, saying that they were for Śiva's *pūjā* and so he would not sell them at any price. The furious princess confiscated the flowers. Her guards arrested Śubhaṅkara and put him in prison. Somnātha went to the king to inquire what had happened, but the king also put the father behind bars. Even in prison, the father and the son continued to pray to Śiva.

Next day, Vijayā fell from her horse and disfigured her face badly. She was engaged to be married to the prince of Yāmkona. Upon learning of her disfigurement, the prince refused to marry her. To make matters worse, the king of Yāmkona declared war on Vinābhramaṇa in the hope of annexing the latter's kingdom. King Vinābhramaṇa was most distressed, and he reasoned that his bad luck was because the gods were displeased with him. His advisors told him to pray to Śiva in the nearby temple of Siddheśvara on the banks of Pinākinī River. The king begged Śiva to forgive him for the mistakes he had made. The god told him to release Somnātha and Śubhaṅkara immediately and make the son his *guru*.

The king released them and gave them clothes, money, and ornaments. He washed their feet and sprinkled the waste water on Vijayā's face. She regained her beauty and then performed the Nandā *vrata*. Later, she married the prince of Yāmkona. Śubhaṅkara became *rājaguru* and provided a source of wisdom, joy and strength for the king.

In a footnote to the chapter, the sons of Somnātha and Śubhaṅkara went to Karnataka and came to be known as 'Gaurava.' Later, they migrated to Maharashtra, and the name 'Gaurava' changed to 'Gurava.' The present-day Guravas in Karnataka wear white cloth,[43] smear their foreheads with *bhasma*, wear a necklace of five-sided *rudrākṣa* beads, and chant the Śivapañcākṣarī-*mantra*, '*namaḥ śivāya*.' They carry a Śiva *liṅga* upon their person. The Maharashtrian Guravas, on the other hand, put a sandalwood mark in place of *bhasma* on the forehead and wear the sacred thread in place of a Śiva *liṅga*.

Shankar Guruji stresses that there is no difference between the two, and they do intermarry.[44] The Purāṇa ends here.

The plot structure of Nandāvratakathā

The plot of the *Nandāvratakathā* is structured in genealogical fashion and details the offering of absolute devotion to Śiva of each generation by both central and incidental characters. The genealogy begins with Śiva himself and mentions Dakṣa's *yajña*, a sacrifice that is archetypal of the conflict between Dakṣa, the Brāhmaṇa, and Śiva. Among the five generations, devotion is tested and always ends in various boons granted by Śiva himself. The boons confer upon Kumāra (and hence his progeny, the Gurava, forever) the profession of music, the mending of the musical instruments, the right to grow and provide flowers for *pūjā*, the right to first *pūjā*, the right to *nirmālya* offerings, and the right to ask favors of Śiva on behalf of the devotees. At no point in the narrative are the devotees (called Gauravas or Guravas) referred explicitly as Brāhmaṇas or even associated with Brahmagāyatrī, despite being associated with the Vedas, *upanayana*, marriage to the daughter of a *ṛṣi*, and so on. The text and its author are both diffident in that they withhold from making an explicit claim to Brāhmaṇahood. They do this by omitting the twin defining characteristics of Brāhmaṇahood, namely, the right to recite the Brahmagāyatrī (homage to the Sun) and the cosmic initial sound '*oṃ*' that precedes it. Moreover, the only *mantra* mentioned in association with this group is the '*namaḥ śivāya*'—note the significant omission of *oṃ*, a sound which implies the Vedas.

METHODS OF AUTHENTICITY IN GURAVA JĀTIPURĀṆAS

As a sacred text, a Jātipurāṇa is designed to fulfill the cultural aspirations and needs of the specific group of people. The myths told in these Purāṇas are understood as facts for claims of original and true caste status, invariably higher than their present position. In other words, the Jātipurāṇas play an important role in lodging the claim to higher status on the part of the caste involved. To attain such an authoritative position, a Jātipurāṇa must appear to be authentic both in terms of convergence with the traditionally sanctioned, if fictionalized, social history and of being a part of the caste tradition (*parampará*) of those castes seeking the new status. Claims are submitted to either the religious or the civil authorities who have the influence to rule over such matters.

The *Laghu Śaivāgama*, the *Sthūla Śaivāgama*, the *Gaurava*, and the

Nandāvratakathā were all written by Guravas, in their own words. They were conceived by the Gurava community to publicly counter the humiliating identification with the Śūdras[45] propagated by the Marathi Brāhmaṇas. Except in the case of the *Nandāvratakathā*, the other Jātipurāṇa authors collected relevant Sanskrit *ślokas*, especially from the *Śiva Purāṇa*, compiled them into chapters, and added the Devalaka myth. The *Laghu Śaivāgama* and the *Sthūla Śaivāgama* added extensive commentaries in Marathi, and the *Gaurava* in Hindi. The author of the *Nandāvratakathā* composed his text in prose. However, he did use Marathi and Sanskrit prayers in the beginning and at the end of the work to imitate the Purāṇic style and to create an impression of traditional authenticity. All four authors have, therefore, found an authoritative mark by using a Purāṇa-like structure in their polemics. Their chapters are *adhyāyas* as the Purāṇas are, and their works begin with homage to Śiva, Gaṇeśa, or another deity. They all claim that the material they present was obtained from the *śāstras* and the Purāṇas and that they are mere collectors and presenters of ancient and divine lore.

The Gurava writers published the stories that apparently all Gurava and Marathi Brāhmaṇas knew from oral tradition. Therefore, they did not feel the need to authenticate the stories by direct reference to the Purāṇas. Their use of Sanskrit verses mainly meant to clothe their work in scholarly garb. However, the *Devalaka Kathāmṛta* goes beyond this. It was authored not by a Gurava but by a Brāhmaṇa, Balshastri Upasani. His work contains most of the marks that define a Purāṇa. As tradition demands, Upasani sought legitimacy through a much closer adherence to the Purāṇic form. He links his work directly to an ancient text like the *Śiva Purāṇa*, thus bringing sanction to his work through tradition (*paramparā*). It makes his work appear as authentic as the *Śiva Purāṇa*. Stylistically, he models the *Devalaka Kathāmṛta* on the *Śiva Purāṇa* story, claiming that what he had to say was not at all new; it had appeared in the *śāstras* before, and he was a mere mortal ordered by the god to produce the work. Hence his claim that Gaṇeśa, the auspicious, Sarasvatī, the goddess of learning, and Vālmīki,[46] the author of the *Rāmāyaṇa*, appeared in visions before him and sanctioned his work. But the Purāṇic formula demands humility of all mortal authors, and Upasani says, 'He knew that as an author he was most inferior, but he was also convinced that God would forgive him for his transgression.' Veena Das suggests that this formal expression of humility can be understood in terms of the 'canons of legitimization in traditional Sanskritic learning' (1967–68: 152).[47] She also submits that later authors normally graft their work on celebrated older authors in order to make their own words appear authentic. This practice/device is absent in the *Devalaka Kathāmṛta*. We do not know whether this is due to the reluctance on the part of Upasani to accord this

level of authenticity to his own statements and thereby concretize the Gurava claim.

Upasani employed the same diction as found in Sanskrit Purāṇas, although his work is in Marathi. The next step in the legitimization process is to identify the Devalaka as the temple priest of ancient times. His purpose is to explain why the Guravas are Brāhmaṇas in spite of their current Śūdra ways. He achieves this in a legitimation of the present status of the Guravas through his identification with the Purāṇic Devalaka. We are told that Sudarśana's failing, Śiva's curse, and the restoration of Sudarśana as Śiva's premier devotee is accompanied by the loss of the right to Vedic *mantras*. This is the price paid for Sudarśana's sin. Being a select devotee, Sudarśana and his descendants are allowed to keep the offerings made by other devotees to Śiva for their own use. A justification is created for the Guravas to accept money and other gifts for their services. The myth legitimizes the Guravas' entitlement to accept money, whereas the use of the Purāṇic genre simply cements the whole story within a Purāṇic, hence Brāhmaṇical, framework.

The myth that the Guravas wish to refute may be summarized as follows: the Brāhmaṇas argue that all Brāhmaṇas have a particular style of life; the Guravas do not share this style. Therefore the Guravas are not Brāhmaṇas. The Guravas argue that they are Brāhmaṇas. However, they allow that they fell into non-Brāhmaṇa ways due to a sin committed by their ancestor. Expiation followed and the price was paid. This does not, however, affect their status as Brāhmaṇas.[48]

The author of the *Nandāvratakathā* deals with matters of authenticity and validation differently than the other authors. His Purāṇa seeks to justify, as traditionally sanctioned, what the Guravas are doing at present. He must explain the Gurava claim to Brāhmaṇahood, since Guravas perform non-Brāhmaṇic tasks, such as acting as musicians, repairing and selling musical instruments, collecting and selling flowers and *bel* leaves, and accepting offerings made to Śiva by other devotees. In keeping with the other authors, he starts his book by saluting Śiva, Pārvatī, Gaṇeśa, Sarasvatī, and his own parents. Beyond that, he uses to his advantage neither Sanskrit nor tradition. In broken Sanskrit he salutes, uncharacteristically, all the Śaiva Guravas who are gods of gods. He then seeks the blessings of Pārvatī and her inspiration for the work. The proverbial *sūta* now appears, and it is he who delivers the entire discourse of this *kathā*. In line with all the other Purāṇas, each *adhyāya* ends with 'Here ends *adhyāya* X of the *Guruvarya Gaurava Kathāmṛta*, Hail to Śiva.'

The Gurava claim to Brāhmaṇahood is supported by Bhomeśvara who claims that he is a Yajurvedi Śaiva Brāhmaṇa, his parents being Śiva and Mother Earth themselves. This claim parallels Sudarśana's claim to be Śiva's adopted son.

The appearance of the sage Nārada and Nandikeśvara at Bhomeśvara's wedding and the acceptance of Bhomeśvara as his son-in-law by the sage Praṇava authenticate and seal Bhomeśvara's claim to Brāhmaṇahood.

The author of the *Nandāvratakathā* is aware that the Gurava professions of picking and selling flowers, selling *bel* leaves, and repairing and playing musical instruments—tasks which necessitate contact with hide—are non-Brāhmaṇa professions that speak against the Guravas' Brāhmaṇahood. The need exists to explain away these aberrations. This is what is spoken to when Bhomeśvara repairs Śiva's drum and makes garlands for Pārvatī. It is the gods themselves who decree that the Guravas become expert in these crafts. Thus two non-Brāhmaṇic professions become the Brāhmaṇa Guravas' god-ordained duties.[49] Another non-Brāhmaṇic practice on the part of the Guravas is in the acceptance of the offerings made to Śiva by other devotees for their own use, something most Brāhmaṇas refuse to do. While the other Purāṇas explain this as a boon given to Sudarśana, the *Nandāvratakathā* explains it as a boon given to Kumāra, the grandson of Bhomeśvara. The story also makes Śiva eat with Kumāra every day and gives the first right to the food to the progeny of Kumāra, the Guravas. One finds in this an echo of the tale of King Bhadrasena. The Guravas are thus Śiva's and Pārvatī's select devotees, and the non-Brāhmaṇa acts they perform are completed because of Śiva's orders and boons. The Guravas' profession and conduct are thus totally vindicated, legitimized, and authenticated. The Purāṇa, however, has no explanation as to why the Guravas are considered Śūdras in Maharashtra, apart from saying that it is due to the jealousy of the Brāhmaṇas. All in all, the *Nandāvratakathā* is a Purāṇa of the triumphant Guravas.

THE JĀTIPURĀṆAS AS A REFLECTION OF HISTORICAL CHANGE

The Jātipurāṇas reviewed, as a whole, reflect a significant cultural change as evidenced by the actions of the Gurava writers. The *Devalaka Kathāmṛta*, the *Sthūla Śaivāgama*, and the *Laghu Śaivāgama* were written and published in the first decade of the twentieth century. Prior to this, attempts to elevate one's caste had been confined to appeals to religious authorities such as the Śaṅkarācārya. This was at least in part because the Guravas could not expect the Koṅkaṇastha Brāhmaṇa Peśvās to admit them into the Brāhmaṇa *varṇa*. In fact, the Peśvās had occasionally taken away temple priesthood from them.

The instatement of the British colonial government provided the Gauravas

with their first opportunity both in terms of allowing them access to their offices and their courts and of the benefits provided by ethnographic and census activities. Yet the British, in their desire to establish an authentic Indian society and culture needed to be convinced, through Sanskrit and śāstric scholarship, that the Guravas were indeed Brāhmaṇas. The Gurava leaders understood this, and they initially employed Brāhmaṇas to write their Jātipurāṇas. It is at this stage that their appeals were tied to, or rather fashioned after, their generic myth.

The Gauravas mounted other attacks on the Brāhmaṇa view, sometimes acting on their own without the Brāhmaṇas, but still Sanskrit (with Marathi commentary) is the language of the debate. Pande and Jehurkar are cast in the traditional *vivāda* role, but one should keep in mind that the Peśvās would not have permitted neither a vitriolic, intemperate tone nor an anti-Brāhmaṇic interpretation of the Devalaka myth, still less the abandonment of it altogether. The critical issue of caste was taken up by the people who were not so much trying to be accepted as Brāhmaṇas as they were seeking an escape from Brāhmaṇa denigration altogether by attempting to join them.

The other two Jātipurāṇas, written seven and eight decades later respectively, are secondary material which support initial claims, one might say almost Gurava *prashāsti*. It now matters less to them who Sudarśana was or what should be done by way of reinterpretation to escape the status disability visited upon them through the myth. The *Nandāvratakathā* is, in fact, a series of triumphs of each generation of the Gurava ancestors. The *Gaurava* is not unique in its proclamation of self-respect. The Brāhmaṇas, despite universal acceptance of their primacy in the ritual and religious arena, do periodically demand explicit respect from the others.

To put it even more abstractly, I might say that the Guravas became free from the social control of the Brāhmaṇas the moment they started to write for themselves. From then on, despite the content of their writing, the significant others became only themselves and the aim became achieving self-respect. The real significance of Gurava microhistory thus lies in the progressive assertiveness of the successive Jātipurāṇas that they authored or caused to be authored.

Notes

1. I have used the words '*jāti*' and 'caste' interchangeably in this paper.

2. The story of Ārya Kṣatriyas is found in a charter given to the coppersmiths of Pandharpur in 1857 by the then Śaṅkarācārya of Śṛṅgeri. The charter was published with some additional material in the form of a booklet by the Brāhmaṇa Narayan Ramchandra Raste.

3. These *gotras* are also held by Brāhmaṇas and often by Kṣatriyas. All Marathi, Hindi, and Sanskrit translations are my own unless otherwise indicated.

4. The logic naturally extends beyond the text and is to be seen in the form of social action on the part of the contestant group.

5. It is interesting to speculate whether Upasani knew about the Tapodhanas, the counterparts of the Guravas in Gujarat.

6. In the *Jñāna Saṃhitā*, Sudarśana's wife is named Duṣkalpā. In all three Gurava Jātipurāṇas, Duṣkulā has been portrayed as the instigator of the sin (*pāpa*) of having intercourse on a holy day. Laying the blame on her is a strategy by which the authors keep the blame away from Sudarśana. In Purāṇic literature, lay women are routinely considered inferior, polluting, and inauspicious.

7. Upasani comments here that, as it is, women are inauspicious and polluted. On top of this, Duṣkulā came from a sinful family. It was, therefore, hardly surprising that Duṣkulā's husband Sudarśana would entertain sinful thoughts as well (*Devalaka Kathāmṛta* p.16).

8. The Purāṇa does not say why Sudarśana returned to earth.

9. The Śivagāyatrī-*mantra* is '*tatpuruṣāya vidmahe mahādevāya dhīmahī tanno rudraḥ pracodayāt*.' The Vedic *mantra* given to the Brāhmaṇas at *upanayana* (sacred thread ceremony) is the Gāyatrī-*mantra* addressed to Savitṛ, the sun-god. Neither the *Śiva Purāṇa* nor the Gurava Jātipurāṇas explain why Sudarśana, the son of a Brāhmaṇa *ṛṣi*, Dadhici, received the Śivagāyatrī-*mantra*.

10. *Ṣoḍaśapacāra-pūjā* is the complete sixteen-part worship that can be offered to any god.

11. It is significant to see that the word '*gurava*' appears only in the Gurava Jātipurāṇas; the *Śiva Purāṇa* mentions only the Devalaka (temple priest). As the Guravas are the contemporary temple priests, they claim to be the descendants of Sudarśana and made the change from Devalaka to Gurava. The point is that the Maharashtrian Guravas do need to bridge the gap between themselves and the Purāṇic Devalakas.

12. The word *baṭu* is used for a child undergoing *upanayana* ceremony, not otherwise in everyday speech.

13. Neither the *Śiva Purāṇa* nor the Gurava Jātipurāṇas explain why the Śiva temple priest has to be different from the other Brāhmaṇas in terms of the *tilaka* marks. Hence my interpretation.

14. Few modern-day Guravas seem even to know about the existence of this Purāṇa, let alone read it daily.

15. The progeny of a Brāhmaṇa by a Kṣatriya woman, a *pratiloma* union.

16. One notes here a thematic similarity between the *Devalaka Kathāmṛta* and

the Ārya Kṣatriya myth quoted earlier. The sin of the Ārya Kṣatriyas is the violation of their Kṣatriya duty of protecting the *ṛṣis*. In Sudarśana's case, the sin is Brāhmaṇic in character. In both stories, it is Śiva who is angered and later placated. In both, the sons of Śiva or Pārvatī are involved, and it is the father who intervenes successfully.

17. This Purāṇa is now out of print. I am grateful to Ganesh Suradkar, a Gurava from Aurangabad, who made his personal copy available to me. It was in a very poor state and several pages following page forty-four were either missing or half torn.

18. A Paṇḍā (plural Paṇḍe) is a lower-class Brāhmaṇa temple priest in various parts of India, including the famous shrine of Kāśiviśveśvara at Benares and Paṇḍharpura in Maharashtra. Marathi Brāhmaṇas definitely class the Pandharpur Pande as lower-class Brāhmaṇas, whereas they insist that a Gurava belongs to the Śūdra caste. It is significant to see a Gurava taking this name.

19. *Dvija*s are those who belong to the Brāhmaṇa, Kṣatriya, and Vaiśya *varṇa*s. This is the first instance I have seen where the Guravas have called themselves *dvija*s. As to why Pande calls himself a *dvija* rather than a Śaiva Brāhmaṇa is unclear. Since Marathi Brāhmaṇas call the Guravas Śūdras, this may well be an attempt by him to stress their non-Śūdra status.

20. Devarāṣṭrīya (Devarukhe) are lower-class Brāhmaṇas in Maharashtra.

21. I have not come across the book *Karmavipāka*. Pande's reference to the *Tristhalīsetu* seems puzzling. The only book I know with this title is the one by Narayanabhatta (1985) that deals with *tīrtha* and pilgrimage. It does not mention Citapāvana Brāhmaṇas at all.

21. This assertion of Pande seems untrue. The Citapāvana and the Karhāde Brāhmaṇas are certainly not ritually barred from any Vedic duties. It may, however, be that when he was alive, a person from these castes may have abandoned Brāhmaṇic practices.

23. '*Upādhye*' or '*upādhyāya*' is the term used for the family priest in Maharashtra. Each family has an *upādhyāya* who is invited to the family home for conducting life-cycle rituals.

24. It must be remembered that only the claim to the first worship in the morning and the last worship at night is ceded by Marathi Brāhmaṇas. If the Guravas claim to be '*gurus*' to the people, such a claim would fall within the ambit of non-Vedic *paramparā*.

25. Pande recounts the tale of a Kannada Brāhmaṇa who had stayed with him. The Brāhmaṇa, upon hearing Pande's assertion about the Guravas' Brāhmaṇa-hood, asked Pande if he knew of any Marathi books that mentioned the Guravas as Śiva temple priests. Pande produced a book called *Ṣodaśenduvāsara*, which did in fact say so. The Brāhmaṇa apparently already knew this and, as further

proof of the Guravas' greatness and profession, produced a book called *Jātimālā* by Narayanabhatta, a text which also confirms it. I was unable to locate either of the books.

26. This is not one of the major Śaivāgamas but probably a minor Śaivite text; I was unable to locate it.

27. It is not clear where Pande obtained this story of the origin of the Śaiva Brāhmaṇas. It does not appear in any of the sources that I have come across thus far.

28. I was unable to find the exact Mughal king of this legend.

29. This reflects a theme of transcending regional boundaries. Many a caste seems to have done this in the 1920s and 1930s under the influence of the Hindu nationalist ideology.

30. This is a very popular *kāmya* ritual (a ritual where the devotee makes a vow in order to obtain a material reward) for Śiva, performed both by men and women all over India on sixteen consecutive Mondays. It involves fasting during the day, followed by a *pūjā* at night. On the seventeenth Monday, the end of the *vrata*, a major *pūjā* to Śiva is performed and sixteen Brāhmaṇas are fed. The ritual was taught to a Śiva devotee by a celestial *apsarā*. The devotee is called Gurava (Marathi and Hindi popular religious literature) and Tapodhana (Gujarati popular religious literature). On the other hand, the *Vratarāja* mentions only a Śiva *gaṇa* called 'Deval.' Once, while Śiva and Pārvatī were playing chess, they made a Śiva devotee a referee. In spite of Pārvatī winning the game many times, the referee, being partial to Śiva, declared that he had won every time. The angry goddess cursed him that he would develop leucoderma. A celestial *apsarā* advised him to perform this ritual in order to rid himself of the disease. The name Deval, for the Śiva devotee, is etymologically related to Devalaka.

31. I was unable to locate this work.

32. This Purāṇa is not included in the available works on Purāṇas, and I was unable to locate it.

33. While the etymological linking of the word '*gurava*' to '*gaurava*' is correct, the Jātipurāṇas are replete with such efforts. Linking, however spuriously, is in fact an important legitimizing device of Gurava status.

34. Arya quotes '*oṃ tatpuruṣāya vidmahe mahādevāya dhīmahī tanno rudraḥ pracodayāt*' as the Śivagāyatrī-*mantra* and says that Pande, the author of the *Laghu Śaivāgama*, asks people to chant this while making oblations to the sun. Arya has included *oṃ*, the Vedic *praṇava mantra*.

35. A copy of the *Śaṃbholiṅga Purāṇa* is said to be available with one Shanmukhaswami Jangama in the village of Chinugundi near Jamkhindi. (Shankar Guruji told me that the Purāṇa is ancient and is written in old

Kannada.) The Jaṅgama apparently translated the gist of it for Shankar Guruji. I was unable to contact this Jaṅgama personally.

36. I gave this interview to the newspaper to give notice that I was interested in meeting all those who had an interest in the Guravas. This is an interesting twist in that the researcher's own work is quoted back by his informant.

37. Normally, a Brāhmaṇa is invited to perform a *pūjā* and then give a discourse on a myth related to the particular ritual. I have not heard of a Gurava being invited to take the place of a Brāhmaṇa in this fashion. The purpose here must obviously be to equate the Gurava with the Brāhmaṇa in terms of ritual importance.

38. In a footnote, the author says, "If you travel from Haridvāra via Gaurī-kuṇḍa, the track becomes very difficult. Near Urvi is a Śiva temple established by Bhairavanātha. Further on, after Kedārnātha, one comes across Bhairavazep cliff. While it is there even today, only a true Śiva devotee will be brave enough to go there. It snows there continuously.'

39. Śaiva Brāhmaṇas (Guravas) do have a *muñj* (*upanayana*) ceremony, but it is no different from that of other Marathi Brāhmaṇas. As they are considered Śūdras, the *muñj* of Guravas is performed in the *purāṇokta*, not the *vedokta*, way.

40. This story has a familiar ring. It is similar to the story of the child Śrīyāla and his parents.

41. One may note here that another Kumāra is Kārttikeya, Śiva's own son, born of Pārvatī to kill the demon Tārakāsura.

42. The tale has a striking similarity to Śiva's wedding to Pāravtī, the daughter of Himālaya.

43. This seems to be puzzling. I know of no Gurava in Karnataka who dresses this way.

44. This seems unlikely because, as far as I am aware, only the Liṅgāyats wear the Śiva *liṅga* around their neck, and there is no intermarriage between them and the Guravas.

45. The presence of a written work in the socioreligious context carried great weight in the past. It could be used to advantage in a personal argument. Sometimes the simple claim to have such a work about one's caste added to the collective prestige of the caste. If not the Brāhmaṇas, such a work would impress other lower castes and attract respect from them.

46. The choice of Vālmīki instead of Vyāsa is interesting. Vālmīki came from a low caste. There is a caste that claims to be Vālmīki Brāhmaṇas, those who perform the rites of untouchables.

47. The canons of legitimation that such authors use are as follows: The sanction is sought through tradition. The work is never claimed to be new.

When written by a mortal, it is to be ordained by God. God appears in a vision and commands the author to compose the work. The author seeks forgiveness both from God and the readers.

48. An alternative conclusion that can be drawn from this reasoning is that the Guravas are not Brāhmaṇas, but they can officiate at rituals to Śiva.

49. This simply means that he retains his lower status but his devotional closeness to Śiva is heightened. We are operating not just with different levels of status but also with different kinds of status.

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Regarding being
Gurav are listed
Obc in Mobilisation
of backward
community in India
page no. 40

The term Other Backward Classes is itself a category of communities of different rank status. The peasant/asset communities such as *Kunabi* and *Mali* claimed on *Kshatriya* status. These communities have become the ruling elite. Also the *Gurav* (servants of the temple) and *Sonar* (goldsmith) communities which enjoy(ed) the status of upper ritual rank, have no history of either the suffering from any social disability or the problem of access to resources/opportunities. But these communities have been granted the status of OBCs. Since the list has not been prepared by any study committee of experts in the field, it has no basis of the standard criteria or methodology. There has not been a case of writ petition in the Bombay High Court against the inclusion/exclusion of a community in the State OBCs list. Therefore, it has been maintained without the adoption of both social and educational tests [because the Article 15(4) of the Constitution specially mentions *socially and educationally backward classes of citizens*].

IMPLICATIONS OF WRONG INCLUSION

We have seen above that some communities have been included wrongly in the categories of SCs, STs and OBCs. The communities, namely, *Barad* and *Khatik* do not belong to the ex-untouchable class. Some communities in NT category do not exhibit the nomadic characteristic at family level and, of them, *Dhanagar* and *Vanjari* are advanced and large in size. Similar is the case of peasant communities and the advanced *Sonars* and *Guravs* in OBCs category. Because of their inclusion, the members of the communities listed in the backward categories are eligible to take the benefits of reservation in admissions to various cources, services and assistance under various schemes of the government,. and the political reservation for SCs and STs is known. Political appointments are also made to the positions of Corporations set up for the improvement of the people belonging to the weaker sections. For instance, Mr. Navnathaji Aavhad, a *Vanjari*, was the Chairman of the *Vasantrao Naik Aarthik Vikas Mahamandal* set-up for the improvement of economic condition of the nomadic tribes people. Since it is the general observation that persons grant their favours to their community members, it cannot be denied that the persons appointed from the advanced groups wouldn't do

From the above all evidence it suggest that Gurav community is subcaste of bramhin and it should be remove from the Obc section from Maharashtra section 43

karnataka section 85

Madhya pradesh section 24

Chhattisgarh section 20

And wherever In Gujrat, Goa, Andra pradesh Gurav community exist their nomenclature should be changed from Gurav to "Shaiva Bramhin" As their synonym .

Demand Note

Subject: Inclusion of Gurav (Shaiva Brahmin) community under the Shaiva Brahmin category in caste records and government resolutions.

Demands:

1. Recognition as Separate Section:

The Gurav community should be regarded as a separate section under the name Shaiva Brahmin in all official records, registers, and documents.

This will help in correct identification of the community whenever socio-economic surveys, caste censuses, or welfare-related schemes are undertaken.

2. Clarification by Government Resolution (GR):

The Government of Maharashtra should issue a clear Government Resolution (GR) stating that Gurav and Shaiva Brahmin are one and the same caste.

This GR should remove all ambiguity regarding the community's status and ensure uniformity across departments.

3. Correction in Section Numbering:

Presently, in Maharashtra the Bramhin caste has been placed in Section No. 2 under general category

We demand that Gurav to be transferred to Section No. 24 as Shaiva Brahmin, ensuring that some conditional reasons.

4. Economic & Social Security:

Recognizing Gurav as Shaiva Brahmin in different section properly will ensure that in case of economic distress or implementation of welfare schemes, the community receives the due benefits and corrective measures without exclusion or confusion.

Thank you.

GURAV OR SHAIVA BRAHMIN DEMANDS AND POLICY REQUIREMENT FROM GOVERNMENT